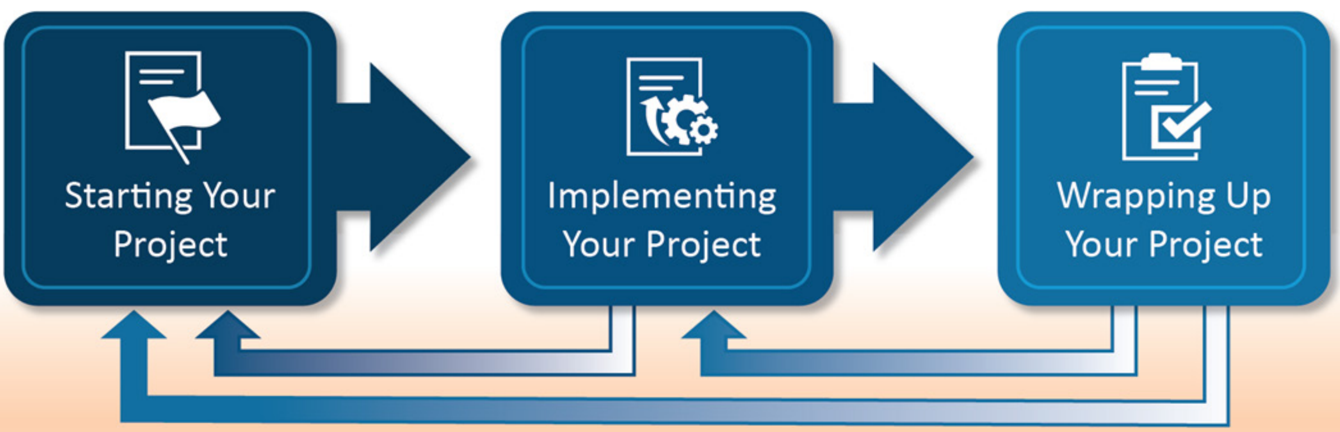
LINCS
Literacy Information and Communication System

The Federal Initiatives Toolkit for OCTAE National Leadership Activities

FEBRUARY 2024



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Acknowledgments

The Federal Initiatives Toolkit (FIT) was developed as part of the management of the Literacy Information and Communication System Technical Assistance Center (LINCS TAC) project by the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®), funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education. The FIT was prepared by the following AIR staff members:

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The FIT is designed to provide guidance for OCTAE national leadership activities on how to leverage LINCS during the lifecycle of an activity/project and to inform other national leadership activities project teams about what is available to them through LINCS.

Development of the FIT has been a collaborative effort with the LINCS IT Technical Support Contractor, CivicActions. The authors would like to thank the following individuals from CivicActions GS-35F-337BA-919990021F0017 who contributed to the FIT:

- Steve Curtis, LINCS IT project manager
- Jonathan Bourland, LINCS IT technical lead
- Vanessa Luxen, LINCS IT support lead
- Nira Datta, LINCS IT user experience research and design lead
- Josh Minarick, LINCS IT Drupal engineering lead
- Kevin Moylan, LINCS IT Drupal engineer
- Kristen Jernigan, LINCS IT support specialist

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Disclaimer

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Introduction

Overview of LINCS

The Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS) (https://lincs.ed.gov) is a national leadership initiative of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE), to expand evidence-based practice in the field of adult education.

LINCS demonstrates OCTAE's commitment to delivering high-quality, evidence-based, on-demand educational opportunities to practitioners of adult education, so those practitioners can help adult learners successfully transition to postsecondary education and 21st century jobs.

LINCS consists of the following components:

1. LINCS Resource Collection—a collection of vetted evidence and research-based resources for adult education practitioners
2. LINCS Community—an online moderated community of practice
3. Learning Portal—online self-paced courses for adult education practitioners
4. State Resources—research and evidence-based professional development and technical assistance opportunities for states and information on current and past Federal Initiatives
5. Learner Center—free online resources for adult learners from other federally funded websites or initiatives

These components provide adult educators with the information, resources, professional development activities, and an online moderated learning network to enhance their professional practice and ensure their adult students receive high-quality learning opportunities.

Purpose of the Federal Initiatives Toolkit

One of the main purposes of LINCS is to expand the use of evidence-based practices in the field of adult education. One way this is achieved is through OCTAE's investments in national leadership activities that advance adult education and improve teacher quality. The LINCS team, which is inclusive of the LINCS Technical Assistance Center (LINCS TAC) and the LINCS Technical Support Contractor, seeks to provide standard guidance for how to move assets, such as those seen in the LINCS Resource Collection, the LINCS Learning Portal, and the LINCS Federal Initiatives page, to LINCS.

The Federal Initiatives Toolkit (FIT) is designed to provide guidance to OCTAE national leadership activities about how to engage with LINCS (https://lincs.ed.gov) on your project work throughout your performance period. This may include leveraging LINCS for activities including, but not limited to, creating a Federal Initiatives page, adding resources to the Resource Collection, hosting activities through the LINCS Community, developing online courses/modules, preparing project trainers to become LINCS trainers, and developing in-person or virtual facilitated training.

The LINCS team will build on the idea that LINCS "harnesses the power of collaboration and sharing to improve educational outcomes" as a central idea for the FIT. The FIT is a living document. As technology evolves, as the LINCS websites change, and as external procedures impact the guidance in the FIT, it will be updated as needed by the LINCS team. The FIT will ensure that staff on new and existing projects understand the connection and coordination needed with the LINCS team to facilitate posting project materials on LINCS.

Organization of the FIT

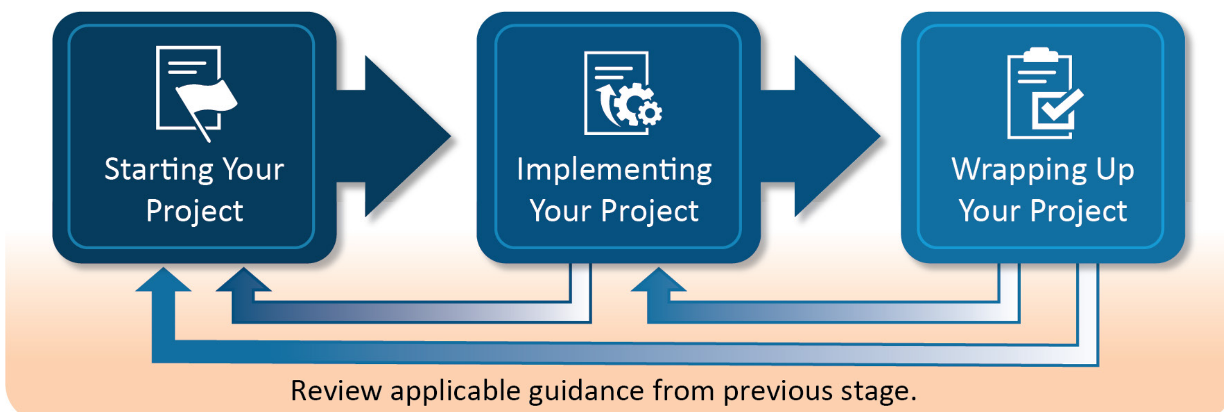
The FIT is organized to align with the different phases of your project: starting your project, implementing your project, and wrapping up your project, followed by the appendices. Within each of these sections, you will find guidance on LINCS and dates to plan around related content and technical requirements.

1. **Starting Your Project**. This section provides information that project staff should know at the onset of their project to plan for future expectations and needs. Think of this as what needs to happen before the end of Year 1 of the project. This part is designed to set projects up with the end in mind so that the engagement, communication, and partnership with LINCS is established at the beginning. This section is where most guidance is provided, including information on who to contact on the LINCS team, scheduling a LINCS Scoping Meeting, developing your Federal Initiatives page, the LINCS Style Guide, LINCS logos, content and technical guidance on creating resources for the LINCS Resource Collection, content and technical guidance for creating courses/modules that will live in the LINCS Learning Portal, dissemination and social media guidance, and other items to consider at the start of a new project.
2. **Implementing Your Project***.* This section includes LINCS support information that projects may need while implementing their project. Outreach and recruitment, announcements, and sharing the work of the project through the Resource Collection, LINCS Universal Technical Assistance (TA) webinars, and the LINCS Community are all important elements for projects while they are in the midst of implementing project tasks.

3. **Wrapping Up Your Project**. This section includes important information for project teams to consider and plan for as they wrap up the project. Some information leveraged while implementing the project will continue in this phase, such as outreach and recruitment, announcements, and sharing the work of the project through the Resource Collection, LINCS Universal TA webinars, and the LINCS Community. This section also will provide content and technical guidance on the final details needed for course development, such as the quality assurance (QA) review process, Section 508 compliance tips, loading content, communication plans for courses, creating course evaluations, and content needed to move courses from development to production before going live. These items should be considered at the start of the final project year, if not before. If the project includes training and TA that will continue beyond the life of the project, this section provides information on steps and logistics that project trainers should be aware of to become LINCS trainers.
4. **Appendices**. This section includes forms, checklists, tools, and a frequently asked questions list with the related answers.

You can find an overall LINCS Project Engagement Timeline in Appendix A to help you stay on track with each of these phases. Figure 1 shows how the content in phases of the project connects.

Figure 1. Project Phases



Starting Your Project

Congratulations! Your project has been funded; now what? This section provides information that project staff should know at the onset of their project to plan for future expectations and needs. Think of this as what needs to happen before the end of Year 1 of the project. In this phase, the working relationship between your project team and the LINCS team is established. This section is where most guidance is provided, including information on who to contact on the LINCS team, scheduling a LINCS Scoping Meeting, developing your Federal Initiatives page, content and technical guidance on creating resources for the LINCS Resource Collection, content and technical guidance for creating courses that will live in the LINCS Learning Portal, dissemination and social media guidance, and other items to consider at the start of a new project.

The LINCS Team/Who to Contact

The LINCS team includes both the LINCS Technical Assistance Center (LINCS TAC, currently managed by the American Institutes for Research [AIR]) and the LINCS Technical Support Contract (currently managed by CivicActions). Following is a table sharing who to contact on the LINCS team should you have questions or need guidance. Please always copy the LINCS project contracting officer's representative (COR) and LINCS project director on any and all communication to task leads.

Table 1. The LINCS Team

LINCS Team Member	Title	Email
Carolyn Lampila	LINCS TAC COR	carolyn.lampila@ed.gov
Cherise Moore	LINCS TAC Project Director	cmoore@air.org
Marcela Movit	LINCS Resource Collection LINCS Universal Webinars and Training	mmovit@air.org
Sudie Whalen	LINCS Director of Online Learning	swhalen@air.org
Michelle Perry	LINCS Community Lead	mperry@air.org
Kevin Belcher	LINCS Communications and Social Media Lead	kbelcher@air.org
Jo Maralit	LINCS IT Tech Support COR	maryjo.maralit@ed.gov
LINCS Technical Support Team	LINCS IT Tech Support	support@lincs.ed.gov

In addition to the specific team members that you may need to contact above, LINCS also has a general LINCS Help Desk and a request for technical support tool for those logged in with a

LINCS account, known as the Wizard. You will see references to using the LINCS Help Desk and Wizard throughout this document. Table 2 includes information to help you access and use them, including the link, audience, and purpose:

Table 2. LINCS Help Desk and LINCS Wizard Overview

	LINCS Help Desk	LINCS Wizard
Link to the tool	https://community.lincs.ed.gov/page/help https://community.lincs.ed.gov/contact/contact_us	https://community.lincs.ed.gov/contact/wizard
Audience	Open to all	Must be logged into the LINCS Community; used for projects that need access to a specific nonpublic LINCS function, such as developing a new course, creating a new community group, or developing a content page on the LINCS Main website. These requests are tracked separately from LINCS Help Desk requests and need approval from the project COR.
Purpose	Used primarily for: • Forgotten passwords • Blocked accounts • Verification issues • Email changes • Issues with LINCS courses or certificates • Adding resources/publications • Broken links • Minor content changes	Used for: • New private group creation • New course creation • Copying existing course • System access request (LINCS Main, reviewers, or LINCS Learning Portal) • Program User Security Training is required for any backend access • Adding a Federal Initiatives page • Uploading a PDF • Access to LINCS YouTube channel • Major content changes • Request landing pages for special initiatives/events

LINCS Team Scoping Meeting

One of the first opportunities to get to know the LINCS team and discuss the parameters of LINCS is during the Scoping Meeting. This joint meeting includes, at a minimum, the project director and key members of the LINCS TAC team, the project director and key members of the national leadership activities team, and the CORs for both projects. This meeting should happen within the **first 60 days** of the project start date.

The focus of the meeting is to understand the new project, discuss the plans and expectations for the project, and share information about the LINCS team (both content and technical contractors) and LINCS capabilities and limitations. The meeting also will provide the project timeline and deliverables schedule so that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of what the needs for the project will be, while sharing the realities of what is feasible within the LINCS system. In addition, the LINCS team will share what options are available in LINCS with a show and tell of LINCS website components.

In preparation for the Scoping Meeting, the LINCS TAC team asks that you complete the Scoping Meeting Questionnaire (Appendix B) to share with the LINCS TAC project director **2 weeks** ahead of the meeting. This questionnaire will be organized around the LINCS components most likely to support the work of the project: the Resource Collection, the Learning Portal, State Resources/Federal Initiatives, and the LINCS Community.

What's My First Step? Schedule the Scoping Meeting. The new project should try to schedule this meeting and invite the project directors and CORs from both the LINCS TAC and LINCS Technical Support project **within 60 days** of the project start date. As appropriate, the project directors will forward the invite to key team members to join this meeting. The meeting should be planned for an hour, with the option to have follow-up meetings as necessary. The LINCS team will provide the agenda for the meeting based on the questionnaire responses.

Following the initial meeting, the LINCS TAC team will be available to answer any questions from the project as needed. If a subsequent meeting is needed, please coordinate with the LINCS TAC project director.

LINCS Style Guide, LINCS Logos, and U.S. Department of Education Disclaimer

The LINCS Style Guide provides standards for the writing, formatting, and design of documents, tools, and materials used on the LINCS website. The style guide ensures uniformity in style and formatting within a document and across multiple documents. The style guide is currently being revised and will be updated with more guidance on:

- plain language and user experience writing best practices, and
- consistent use of design components.

Please be sure to use the LINCS Style Guide when you need it to ensure that you are following the current guidance. The LINCS logo can be used to promote the LINCS website, training, event, or resource or to acknowledge LINCS affiliation. The logo cannot be used to imply or endorse a product or service. You may not change the colors or size ratios of the LINCS logo. Please review detailed guidance on usage of the LINCS logo.

For publications, please be sure to include your vendor name, contract name, and contract number along with the U.S. Department of Education disclaimer.

Federal Initiatives Page

Your project should have a presence on the LINCS Federal Initiatives landing page (https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives). The LINCS Federal Initiatives landing pages serve as repositories for training, online courses, resources, and products developed by OCTAE national leadership activities and make these resources accessible indefinitely. This landing page provides a home for past and present Federal Initiatives to share resources, tools, videos, and information about the projects with the field. The main Federal Initiatives landing page lists national leadership activities by name, grouped into topical categories. From here, visitors can follow links to the various landing pages for each project. For continuity and ease of locating key information and resources from your project, the following elements should be provided and included on your project's landing page:

- Project title
- Project logo
- Project description—a brief, high-level summary about the project in four to seven sentences, which should include the length of the project/period of performance and opportunities to engage with the project, and also may include the organization managing the project
- Project objectives—goals and purpose, benefits, projected outcomes, and so on
- Project timeline—important project dates, such as webinars, events, training dates, and recruitment deadlines
- Project resources—links to ancillary project pages, supporting project documents, videos, and so on

Other elements that may appear on your project landing page include the following:

- Project announcements—for active projects, for example, recruitment dates or project bulletins
- Links to related, existing LINCS components or resources (e.g., a LINCS Community group, Learning Portal course, or Resource Collection resource); note that separate processes and guidance will apply to adding new Learning Portal courses or Resource Collection resources
- Additional page text and organization as needed to present linked resources in context

A template is provided in Appendix C to help you develop your Federal Initiatives page. Please visit existing Federal Initiatives pages for inspiration and ideas. Here are a few examples of Federal Initiatives pages: https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/advance-iet, https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/draw, and https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/teaching-skills-matter-adult-education.

Your project will designate one lead person for making updates to the Federal Initiative landing page. Your Federal Initiative landing page should be published within **90 days** of the project start date. Once it is published, your project will be asked to provide the LINCS TAC team with an announcement to notify the field that your project's page has been published. Once the announcement has been reviewed and approved by your COR, please have them share the approved announcement with the LINCS TAC COR.

Technical Guidance

Requests to set up new Federal Initiatives pages should be initiated with a Wizard ticket, sent by your COR to the LINCS Technical Support Contractor. In addition to the content in the body of the page, the request should include the following information:

- Title of page
- Name of author (LINCS permits only one lead author/content creator per Federal Initiatives page)
- Number of pages or subpages
- Page URL (URLs should follow this format: /state-resources/federal-initiatives/[initiative-name])

The page author will be contacted to set up an account and arrange any details for this account; for example, if they will be acting as a course developer, uploading video to the LINCS YouTube channel, or serving as a group moderator on the LINCS Community site. They also will be instructed to take the LINCS Program User Security Training at this time.

Note that your page's body content should use the styles and formats that are in the rich text editor in the Drupal interface, which will ensure consistency within the codebase. Do not include JavaScript or Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). Structure your content with headings and subheadings to improve readability, as follows:

- The title of projects should be short and concise, fewer than 50 characters and spaces (use H1).
- Break up the rest of the content with subheadings (H2s and H3s).
- Use headings in a logical order.
- Include the relevant key point in the headings.
- Use simple and clear language.
- Keep headings to a single sentence.
- Avoid using punctuation, such as periods, commas, or semicolons, in headings.

– Write in sentence case (capitalize the first word and proper nouns only).

Page content will be reviewed first by your COR or project manager and then by the LINCS Technical Support Team for compliance.

Appendix D presents a process and checklist for creating a LINCS Federal Initiative landing page for your project. It includes steps related to identifying and drafting page content, coordinating with the technical contractor to ensure that technical requirements are met and to create the page, gaining access for the project's web developer to develop the page, and working through the review and approval process with the project COR and the LINCS IT COR.

LINCS Resources

The LINCS Resource Collection (https://lincs.ed.gov/resource-collection) contains a collection of more than 800 high-quality multimedia instructional resources, informed by research, for use by adult educators. The resources in the collection are limited to items that have gone through a rigorous internal and external review process conducted by subject-matter experts and have been recommended and approved by OCTAE's Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL). These resources have a sound theoretical framework and an application to the adult education field. They are searchable by category, keyword, year, and more.

Guidance on Content Development

Please keep in mind the following requirements for the final versions of any TA and training resources developed for your project:

- All resources will need to be 508 compliant. A PDF report verifying compliance is required and must be submitted to OCTAE. Please refer to the 508 Compliance section for details on steps and requirements.
- Minimize, to the extent possible, the number of links within the resource because websites are often reorganized and external resources may move, leading to broken links.

Your project will need to develop and complete a LINCS Resource Collection Profile for each new resource the project intends to add to the Resource Collection so that it can be reviewed and added. The narrative of the profile can be a good place to include additional links that you want to provide but that are not in the resource itself. You will find the Resource Collection Profile Form in Appendix E. Please see Appendix F for an example of what the final profile will look like in the Resource Collection.

Following is the information you will need to provide for the profile:

- **Resource Title**. This can include subtitles.

- **Related Topic**. You will select this from a dropdown list and can pick more than one from the following:
  - Career Pathways and Postsecondary Transitions
  - Civics Education and Citizenship
  - Correctional and Reentry Education
  - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
  - English Language Acquisition
  - Integrating Technology
  - Learners With Disabilities
  - Math and Numeracy
  - Professional Development
  - Program Management
  - Reading and Writing
  - Science
  - Teaching and Learning
- **Resource Type**. You will select this from a dropdown list and can pick only one from the following:
  - *Informational.* Materials that provide information about adult education that are not specific to instruction, professional development, or research. These include policy briefs, videos, and programmatic materials that are intended to improve the functioning of adult education programs.
  - *Instructional.* Materials that relate to adult education instruction, including curricula, lesson plans, supplemental materials, and assessments.
  - *Professional Development.* Materials that are used for increasing the knowledge and skills of adult educators.
  - *Research.* Materials that present the results of descriptive, quasi-experimental, and experimental research.
- **Product Type.** You will select this from a dropdown list and can pick more than one from the following:
  - Informational Material
    - Annotated Bibliography
    - Article
    - Informational Video
    - Journal Issue
    - Policy Brief
    - Programmatic Material
    - Toolkit

- Website
- Website Evaluation Tool

- Instructional Material
  - Course Outline
  - Curriculum
  - Instructional Video
  - Interactive Tutorial
  - Lesson Plan
  - Online Course
  - Teaching Strategy
- Professional Development and Research
  - Descriptions of Practice
  - Professional Learning Materials
  - Descriptive Research
  - Quasi-Experimental Research
  - Randomized Controlled Trial

- **Description**. You will provide a short, one-sentence summary of the resource.
- **Resource URL**. All resources must have a virtual "home."
  - If the resource is hosted externally, its URL should be entered as a profile.
  - If the resource is internal and it has not been uploaded to the Resource Collection yet, you will need to upload the file to a project page or request to have the file uploaded to LINCS via a Wizard ticket. Once that is done, the URL will be provided to you.
- **Author(s)**. This is not a required field.
- **Author(s) Organizational Affiliation**. This is not a required field.
- **Publication Year**.
- **Keywords**. These will be used as search terms.
- **Number of Pages**. Do not include the cover, title, glossary, and appendices.
- **Target Audience**. You will select this from a dropdown list and can pick more than one from the following:
  - Administrators
  - Adult Learners
  - Business Partners
  - Family and Community Supporters
  - Instructional Staff

- Policymakers and Implementers
- Researchers and Developers
- Student Support Staff
- Teacher Trainers

- **Image.** Only one file can be used for each resource. It can be a screenshot of the cover or a key graphic from the resource. The file may be a png, gif, or jpg/jpeg. The image must be larger than 450 x 1 pixels, but the file cannot be larger than 8 MB.
- **Alternative (Alt) Text.** This short description of the image will be used by screen readers and displayed when the image is not loaded. This is important for accessibility.
  - Be concise: 80 to 150 characters maximum (no more than three lines).
  - Consider including the race/ethnicity of the person in the image. For blind users, inclusive text descriptions normalize the diverse ways that humans can see.
  - Consider the context of the image by looking at the content that surrounds it.
  - Prioritize content that is most important to the image's meaning. Use clear and descriptive text.
  - Avoid repeating content that is already next to the image (i.e., title, caption, body text).
  - Avoid words such as "image of" or "picture of." Screen readers announce "image" already.
- **Abstract**. This can come from the resource itself if it already has an abstract. This should be three to four sentences.
- **Benefits and Uses**. You will provide a paragraph or two summarizing how the resource should be used and the benefits to the field. Highlight key components of the resource that are especially useful.
- **Required Training**. This is not a required field and is mainly for resources connected to a Federal Initiative involving training and TA. You will list any training that participants should have before using the resource; for example, "Participation in the [project name] training."

Announcements and Social Media

As the project is wrapping up, announcements and social media dissemination should have already begun. At this point, announcements for final resources may be shared with the field. For a reminder and guidance on announcements and social media, please see "Announcing Your Projects and LINCS Social Media" under the Starting Your Project section.

Announcing Your Projects and LINCS Social Media

LINCS was designed to organize and promote resources within the field of adult education and serve as a central repository for information. LINCS promotes resources through sharing announcements with all LINCS Community members and through leveraging the LINCS social media channels: X (formerly Twitter) (https://twitter.com/LINCS_ED), LinkedIn (LINCS_ED https://linkedin.com/groups/4555711/), and YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/LincsEd).

Your Project's LINCS Communication Plan

For the LINCS team to help your project with announcements and social media postings, your project will need to provide the LINCS team with a communication plan that includes the following:

- Your COR-approved announcement and social media
- Any LINCS sitewide announcements you would like to post
- The dates you want the announcements and social media posted
- Alt text for any images you want included with the social media

Your project communication's plan should be sent no later than **2 weeks** ahead of when you want the items disseminated. Please err on keeping the announcement and social media posts simple and to the point. Please note, as project timelines can sometimes change due to many factors, if your project has multiple important announcement events/dates, send a separate communication plan for each event/set of dates. The U.S. Department of Education blocks shortened links (such as bit.ly), so the full link must be included in announcements and social media posts. Appendix G provides an example of a social media post and an announcement from a project communication plan.

Announcing Your Project

You may post communitywide announcements through the LINCS Community to share details of your project, such as links to informational webinars about the project and/or recruiting activities. Work with your project COR for approval of the announcement before sending the approved announcement to the LINCS TAC COR. Please include the following information:

- Title/subject line.
- Full text for the announcement. Please keep additional formatting limited to bold, italics, and bullets or numbering for lists.
- Full URLs, if any, that are to be included. Please do not include shortened links, such as bit.ly.
- Date by which the announcement should be posted.

Announcement requests should be sent to the LINCS TAC COR at least **2 weeks prior** to the requested posting date.

Social Media Technical Requirements

LINCS X (formerly known as Twitter)

LINCS X/Twitter (@LINCS_ED) allows users to easily be informed about resources and training opportunities offered through LINCS and for users to share these opportunities with their network and colleagues. Great topics for social media posts include synchronous events, asynchronous discussions, newly released resources, and resources that connect to holidays or days of appreciation. The success of posts on X/Twitter can be measured by a variety of analytical tools. These measurements include the number of posts, reposts, impressions, likes, link clicks, replies, and new followers, as well as the engagement rate. Following are four key strategies that can build engagement that may be displayed in these metrics:

- First, many of the best social media posts are brief. Although X/Twitter encourages a sense of brevity with a 280-character limit, some of the most effective posts contain fewer than half that amount, registering between 71 and 100 characters.
- Second, be sure to have a clear call to action, such as registering for an event, submitting a resource or discussion post, or answering a question.
- Third, it is great to use visuals when possible. Please note that it is vital that the image chosen obeys all copyright laws. Accordingly, sites such as Unsplash, Pixabay, and Pexels can be helpful, as they feature royalty-free stock images. Upon choosing an image, it is important that alt text of fewer than 1,000 characters be used to describe the visual and any text included in the image in detail.
- Finally, reach your audience by using appropriate hashtags. X/Twitter Explore is a great tool for finding trending hashtags. Please note, however, that using only two or three hashtags is most effective.

LINCS LinkedIn

LINCS LinkedIn (LINCS_ED) also presents opportunities for participants to stay up to date on the latest LINCS opportunities, resources, and events. Unlike X (formerly Twitter), in which users are not required to have an account to see what is posted, LINCS LinkedIn operates as a group. Individuals must send a request to be accepted and added to the group. Once the LINCS social media team vets the request and adds the individual to the group, they are able to share resources to the group page. Analytics used to measure engagement are more limited than X, but they include the numbers of new and active members, posts, post views, comments, and reactions. Unlike X, LinkedIn allows posts to be much longer, at 3,000 characters.

LINCS YouTube Channel

LINCS maintains a YouTube channel, under the username LINCS_ED (https://www.youtube.com/@LINCSED), which serves as a repository and viewing platform for video content from OCTAE-funded projects. As stated on the channel's "About" page, "Videos on the LINCS_ED Channel include webinars, live recordings, and other materials on OCTAE's national activities such as: career pathways; reentry education; educational technology; and more!" The collection also houses video components used in project toolkits, LINCS courses, and more. Videos from your project added to the LINCS channel can be organized into one or more project-specific playlists, making it easy for users to locate all resources related to the project.

These scenarios may be further described as follows:

- Featured screencasts, recorded webinars, and video-recorded seminars/conference talks; often included in a YouTube playlist (organized around a specific project or other theme) and promoted to the front of the LINCS YouTube channel (URL found above)
- Video content hosted via channel, but only exposed to the public via "embed code"; placed into various web resources (e.g., coursework content from the LINCS Learning Portal, special landing pages on lincs.ed.gov)

Video Technical Requirements

Videos included on the LINCS YouTube channel should meet the following technical requirements:

- Video should be in raw (AVI) or WMV format (preference is for uncompressed/raw format).
- If the video is a recorded webinar or meeting, please convert it to the appropriate video format before delivering the video.
- Your project also must provide a transcription file of the video for use in YouTube captioning.

Video Justification Requirements

For videos to be housed on the LINCS YouTube channel, your project staff must:

- Request access for one project team member to the LINCS YouTube account via the LINCS Wizard. The team member who is given access must take or have taken the most recent LINCS security training.
- Include closed captions in all videos and ensure 508 compliance (please see the 508 Compliance section for guidance).
- Upload the video and transcript to the LINCS YouTube channel using "private" settings so that the video will not yet be publicly viewable. Also, upload a video transcript or caption file.
- Share 508 reports with your COR.
- Coordinate with the LINCS Technical Support Contract COR once the video is ready to be made publicly available (i.e., playlist on channel home page versus embed code).

LINCS Community

The LINCS Community (https://community.lincs.ed.gov/) is a community of practice for adult education practitioners. This professional learning space brings together adult educators worldwide to work together toward one common goal—providing high-quality, evidence-based learning opportunities to adult learners. The community is a place where practitioners can seek help from experts and peers, collaborate, network, share knowledge and resources, participate in special events, and grow professionally. The community promotes and provides activities that deepen the connections within the LINCS system for practitioners to access professional development materials, reflect on their teaching practices, and apply what they have learned in their classrooms. As your project is launching, the LINCS Community is available to help in several ways as follows:

1. **Establish a Private Group for Your Project**. A private group may be needed or wanted for your project to provide a place to keep project materials for trainers and/or training participants to access, for participants in any training or TA to gather to share learning experiences or complete tasks, or for any other number of reasons you want a private group for your project. To establish a private group, submit a request using the LINCS Wizard. Please note that you will need to be logged into the LINCS Community to access this page. Under Request Type, select “New Group Creation Request.” Then, provide the following information:
   - **Group Type**. Choose from Public Group, Micro-Group, or Private Group. Private groups are only accessible by the members of the group. Group admins may add members.
   - **Group Name**. This is the title of the group that you want displayed. Please limit your group name to 60 characters, including spaces.
   - **Group Purpose**. A short description (200 characters or fewer) outlining the purpose of this group. This information will be displayed on group list pages.
   - **What is this group’s description?** Please describe how the group will be used—the group’s purpose, target audience, and expected outcomes.
   - **Which users should serve as the group administrator and moderator?** The group administrator is responsible for managing group memberships and monitoring group activity. The group moderator serves as the subject-matter expert for the group. Both roles can be applied to the same person.
     - Group administrator(s): Supply the LINCS username or email address for each.
     - Group moderator(s): Supply the LINCS username or email address for each.
2. **Connect With an Existing Community Group**. Consider posting about your new Federal Initiative in one of the Community groups or reach out to the moderator of a Community group that most aligns with your work to share information about your project. Please note that you will need to be a member of the LINCS Community and subscribed to specific groups to post content or comment.

Guidance on Technical Requirements for Creating a Private Group

To create a new private group, please submit a group creation request via the LINCS Wizard. Please note that you will need to be logged into the LINCS Community to file a group creation request. To file a request:

- Visit https://community.lincs.ed.gov/wizard. (Note: You must be logged in to the LINCS Community to access the LINCS Wizard).
- Complete and submit the form based on what you need.

Once a request is received by the LINCS Technical Support Contractor and approved by OCTAE, the LINCS Technical Support Contractor will create the group as requested.

If this is a private group, it is your project's responsibility to populate the group membership and otherwise customize the group page. Group manager "how-to" documents are posted inside each group for every group manager. Private groups must be approved by the project COR and the LINCS IT Technical Support COR.

Please keep in mind that with any of the above options, project staff and project materials are required to follow the LINCS Community Code of Conduct at all times. Group managers also should monitor discussions and remove comments that violate the Code of Conduct. Please contact the LINCS Help Desk should you have any questions.

LINCS Learning Portal

The LINCS Learning Portal is an open-access, web-based learning platform that enables learners, instructors, and organizations to access online learning opportunities. The courses offered on the LINCS Learning Portal are freely available to educators to further their professional development. There are nearly 40 self-paced online courses available for use anytime, anywhere. Course participants must register for each asynchronous course offered in the Learning Portal. The courses use Moodle as the learning management platform (the LINCS TAC will confirm which current version is being used during the Scoping Meeting). Certificates are provided to participants upon completion of courses. Your project may request to either (a) create a brand-new course or (b) run a new course section. Requesting a "new course" refers to the creation of a Moodle shell to build and develop new course content. Requesting a "course section" refers to the duplication of an existing course for updates or minor revisions.

Creating a New Course

The steps below provide information regarding how to create a new course within the LINCS Learning Portal. The information below is specific to brand-new course development (i.e., the course does not currently exist, it is not a revision of an existing course, or it is a course revision that is extensive enough that the original course content and structure will not be used).

- Your project submits a "System Access Request" Wizard ticket to request the following:
  - Enrollment in LINCS Program User Security Training for all course developers/designers who need access to the course development site.
  - Access to the course development site. Please note that your project will not have access to the course development site until security training is completed.
- Once security training is complete and your project has been informed that they now have access to the development site, they can submit a "New Course Creation Request" through the LINCS Wizard. Be sure to include the primary person who will be managing all course development. This individual will be promoted to "teacher," which gives them the ability to author the course and enroll others on the project team who have already completed the security training.
- The course developer(s) build(s) the course, adhering to the guidelines as set forth by the Guidance on Technical Requirements for Course Development section below, and submits it to the project COR for review and approval prior to submitting it to the Information Technology Accessibility Program (ITAP) for review. Please see the 508 Compliance section to help prepare the course for ITAP review.
- The project COR submits the course to the U.S. Department of Education's ITAP office for 508 compliance review. Should the course not pass review, the project staff is responsible for any necessary 508 compliance remediations. The project staff should notify the project COR once revisions are complete; the project COR will then request a second review by the ITAP office. Please note that there may be several rounds of review for 508 compliance.
- After the course passes 508 compliance, the project COR grants final approval to move the course into production, provides the technical COR with evidence of ITAP approval, and requests the course to be evaluated via the technical QA (this may take up to 2 weeks). Please refer to the 508 Compliance section for details on steps and requirements. If the course includes customized videos, please see the LINCS YouTube Video Upload Checklist in Appendix H.
- The project must meet the technical QA requirements as outlined in Appendix I. The project team and project COR should each conduct QA to ensure that the technical requirements are met. The COR should provide an explanation of requirements not met and include screenshots, as appropriate. The project COR will share the QA checklist with the LINCS Technical Support and TAC CORs for further QA reviews. The project team is responsible for addressing all technical issues identified through the QA analyses. All issues should be resolved prior to publishing. This is a required step before courses can be published in the LINCS Learning Portal.
- Once the course is ready to be published, the COR for the project should submit a Wizard ticket, confirming that 508 compliance approval has been obtained. Please submit the 508-approval report with confirmation that the course is ready to be moved into production and published by a noted specific date. Please note that a minimum of **2 weeks'** advance notice is necessary.

- The project COR will be notified once the course has been moved to the LINCS Learning Portal and is ready for final review. The project will be responsible for evaluating the course again to confirm that all links and documents are intact and the course is functioning normally. Once the project team has confirmed that the course is functioning as it should, the project COR will notify the technical contractor COR that the course is ready to go live.
- The technical contractor COR will notify the project COR once the course is live.

New Course Section

A course section is a duplicate of an existing facilitated course with the intention of having a different group of participants enrolled. A course section also applies to revisions of an existing self-paced course in which the original content and structure are needed for the update. This is comparable to section numbers of the same course in higher education. To request a new instance of a facilitated course section:

- The project team submits a "New Course Section" request through a LINCS Wizard ticket.
- The project COR approves the request for the addition of a new course section.

Because a new section is an anonymized (no user data) "copy" of an already approved course, the new section is created directly on production (https://courses.lincs.ed.gov). However, the new course section is "hidden" from the public until final project COR approval.

Once the course section has been created, if modifications are needed for the new course section, the project team must:

- request that the project or course facilitator be granted "teacher" account status through a LINCS Wizard request to allow course editing;
- complete LINCS Program User Security Training, if needed; and
- edit the course per the Guidance on Technical Requirements for Course Development.

After final project COR approval, the course will be either (a) be made public or (b) allow enrollment of specific users (for private courses).

Private Versus Public Courses

- Private courses:
  - » are hidden from public view,
  - » are usually facilitated courses, and
  - » may only be accessed if the user is specifically enrolled.
- Public courses:
  - » are publicly displayed on the Learning Portal's home page (after initial login), and

- are typically “self-enrollment,” whereby the user may simply join the course and complete it at their own pace.

Private and public courses both have the option to be either in a topic-driven/self-paced or time-driven/week-based format.

Guidance on Technical Requirements for Course Development

Courses should be built directly in the LINCS Moodle Development site. This is critical to ensure that course production goes smoothly. Course developers also may build their courses with other tools compatible with Moodle, such as Articulate Rise 360 or Vyond. Make sure the project’s course developer uses tools that support accessibility. All courses must pass the U.S. Department of Education’s ITAP 508 compliance review.

In general, the LINCS team does not recommend exporting a complete course from any course-building tool. Please break the course up into sections and export them to HTML by course unit. To facilitate this task, relatively small e-learning packages can be added to the LINCS Moodle Development site.

Course Names

Courses in Moodle have a couple of different name attributes. Please keep the following in mind:

- The course’s “full name” is used on the completion certificate. It is recommended to include the course category along with the title (typically fewer than 60 characters or a maximum of 67 characters).
- The course’s “short name” is used in the breadcrumb. It is recommended to strive for as short a name as possible.

Course Descriptions

Include a one- to two-paragraph synopsis of the course. This will be displayed when an end user is viewing all of the courses as they are filed by category and can be displayed in other areas as well (i.e., About the LINCS Learning Portal, LINCS Training Catalog, and LINCS Learning Portal Courses). The length of these descriptions is not the same; project staff should ensure that multiple descriptions are provided and can be placed on the associated pages. Please review the links above to see examples of current descriptions for the different LINCS pages. Please also include estimated hours of completion, and add the standard contract disclaimer with the contract number at the bottom of the main page.

Course Content Appearance and Fonts

Although it is common practice to copy and paste content from popular word processing software, the course author should take care to audit and ensure that formatting is not transferred to Moodle. A handy solution for this is to paste the text into a plain text document first to remove the formatting. From there, the text can be copied and pasted into Moodle.

Course Participant Visibility

If the course is to be ongoing and asynchronous (open self-enrollment), the student role should have the “View Course Participants” permission removed.

If, however, the course is more synchronous (facilitated) in nature, the “View Course Participants” permission should remain active for the student role.

PDFs

Any pdfs added to the course should be Section 508 compliant. Please also keep in mind the PDF’s file size and the amount of time it would take a user to view or download the PDF on a slow connection. All 508 reports for PDFs should be sent to the project COR and LINCS team. While the course is under review and the PDFs are pending approval, the PDFs and their associated accessibility reports can be uploaded to Moodle. Once the accessible PDFs are approved, the files can be sent to the technical COR (via the project COR) for uploading and URL creation. The technical COR will then provide the URLs to the project COR. Once the URLs are provided to the project team, the links to the documents within the course must be updated to ensure the links do not break once the course is moved to production.

Links

Https

All links included in content should use “https” and not “http.” Because LINCS sites are served securely over https, all of the embedded and internal content also must be referenced over https. If this is not done, browsers will restrict the display of the nonsecure content and may not render the page.

For example, using raw HTML, if the course developer wanted to embed a photo that is being stored on another server:

Incorrect:

Correct:

Internal Links

If the course developer inserts links to other pages or files in the site into the course content, be aware that these links will need to be updated when the course goes to production. Please let the LINCS team know if there are internal links in the course content.

Course Evaluation

As part of the course, please be sure to add a link to the LINCS Training Evaluation for Courses (OMB Control Number 1880-0542): https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6221234/LINCS-Training-Evaluation.

Completion Certificates

Currently, there is only one approved certificate design for courses delivered via the LINCS Learning Portal.

To set up, please follow these steps:

1. Determine and configure the completion triggers.
2. Add the “Certificate” activity to a Moodle topic content area (there are more options, but the following are required):
    a. General
        i. Certificate Name = the title of the link inside the content area
        ii. Introduction = [optional...can be left blank]
    b. Issue options
        i. Email teachers = [depends on desired behavior]
        ii. Email others = [depends on desired behavior]
        iii. Delivery = Open in new window
        iv. Save Certificates = YES
        v. Required minutes in course = [depends on desired behavior]
    c. Text options
        i. Print Date = Date Issued
        ii. Date Format = January 1st, 2000
        iii. Print Code = No
        iv. Print Grade = No

v. Print Outcome = No

vi. Print Credit Hours = type in number of hours to complete the course

vii. Print Teacher Name = No

viii. Custom Test = [leave Blank]

d. Design options

i. Certificate Type = LINCS

ii. Orientation = Landscape

iii. Border Image = No

iv. Border Lines = No

v. Watermark Image = No

vi. Signature Image = DAEL-signature

vii. Seal or Logo Image = LINCS-Color-Logo-small

e. Common module settings

i. Availability = Show on course page

ii. ID number = [leave blank]

iii. Group mode = No groups

f. Restrict access

i. Set as needed. However, if the certificate "lives" inside of its own topic, and the course developer has restricted access to the topic, then adjustments may not be needed.

Source Files

Please note that the project must transfer all project source files to the LINCS team when the project's courses are published in the LINCS Learning Portal. This is necessary and required so that the LINCS team can make fixes and updates to courses, as needed, after they are published in the Learning Portal and the project contract ends. All files, including handouts, course components (e.g., Articulate modules, videos, audio recordings), and accessibility reports, should be provided to the LINCS TAC team COR. To expedite this process, please complete the following actions:

1. Create two folder activities and ensure that the folders are hidden.

   a. Name one folder "Handouts and Accessibility Reports."

        i. Please place the ITAP accessibility report, all 508c handouts, and their associated accessibility reports in this folder.

b. Name one folder "Outline."

        i. Please place the final course outline in this folder.

Please note that LINCS is required to archive course materials with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) once a course is no longer live. Delivery of all source files, including original storyboard content, ensures the most complete transfer of material to NARA.

508 Compliance

Special care must be taken that all materials developed through a Federal Initiative that are to be made publicly available, whether a resource, course, social media post, or presentation, are accessible to people with physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities and comply with the standards and guidelines issued under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and Section 255 of the Communications Act.

Table 3 identifies recommended steps by resource type for ensuring 508 compliance of materials, the responsibilities of the project team, and links to checklists and other documents to ensure that 508 compliance requirements are considered from the beginning of the project so that the final materials are fully accessible.

Table 3. LINCS 508 Compliance Guidance

LINCS Documents (e.g., project resources, handouts, PowerPoints)	LINCS Courses	LINCS Social Media (including YouTube channel)	LINCS Recorded Presentations
Ensure that all images, form image buttons, and image map hot spots have appropriate, concise alternative text.	Ensure that all content included in the course and handouts is color contrast compliant. Tools such as the WebAIM Contrast Checker can be used to confirm if the colors chosen are complaint.	Ensure that all visuals, including images, graphics, and videos, are color contrast compliant.	Check any slides you are using for color contrast.

LINCS Documents (e.g., project resources, handouts, PowerPoints)	LINCS Courses	LINCS Social Media (including YouTube channel)	LINCS Recorded Presentations
Ensure that tables are used for tabular data and data are contained in separate data cells.	Ensure that all content in the course is tested to confirm that it works for those who may be hearing or vision impaired.	Ensure that all graphics can be accessed by a screen reader by providing alt text or a visual description in the transcript.	Read or summarize all text on the slides. The experience for participants must be the same whether or not they are able to see the slides.
Check for color contrast.	Ensure that handouts are made 508 compliant and include an accessibility report.	Best practices for accessible social media content include using plain language to ensure understanding, using camel case for multiple words in a hashtag (e.g., #AdultEd) for correct screen reader pronunciation, and clearly describing where links direct to in each post. Other best practices can be found in the Federal Social Media Accessibility Toolkit Hackpad.	Describe thoroughly (similar to alt text) any images that contribute to the understanding of the content. Images that are decorative do not need to be described.
Review your document using the appropriate checklist as follows to develop your accessibility report: DAEL 508 Word Checklist DAEL 508 PDF Checklist DAEL 508 Excel Checklist DAEL 508 PowerPoint Checklist	Provide handouts and accompanying accessibility reports to the project COR.		Upload a transcription file with the recording to the LINCS YouTube channel.
Provide documents and accompanying accessibility reports to the project COR.	The project COR will submit the course for an accessibility evaluation.		Review your recording using the Technical Compliance Checklist (Appendix J) to develop your accessibility report.
			Provide the accessibility report for the recording to the project COR.

Things to Consider Related to Technical Assistance and Training

Although the end of the project seems far away when the project is just starting out, there are some issues to consider now that will ease the ultimate transition of the project to LINCS at that point. The TA and training provided during your project may continue to be available through the LINCS project. If that is the case, the goal will be to make the transition as seamless as possible. This transition will require not only a transfer of the resources your project creates and uses during the project but also information, such as how much your project's trainers were paid, how the TA was advertised to the field, how recruitment occurred, how information was disseminated to participants, which trainers were most successful, and how to access the training materials. The Transitioning Technical Assistance and Trainers' Form/Checklist, found in Appendix K, will be completed by your project staff and approved and submitted by the project COR **90 days** before the end of the project.

Implementing Your Project

So, your project has passed the planning phase and is now in the implementation stage. Congratulations! This section includes information that project staff may need support on from the LINCS team while completing various project tasks. Outreach and recruitment, announcements, and sharing the work of the project through LINCS Universal TA webinars, the Resource Collection, and the LINCS Community are all important elements for project staff while they are in the midst of implementing project tasks.

LINCS Universal TA Webinars

The LINCS project uses a three-tiered approach to providing TA to states with the goals of building their capacity in improving programs, enhancing instruction, and supporting students. As part of the TA that is offered to all states, a monthly webinar is offered, usually held on the last Wednesday of the month from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. ET/12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. PT. This monthly series covers topics that matter most to the field.

Among those topics that matter most is the focus of your project. Presenting a webinar as part of this series provides an opportunity for your project to highlight the work you are doing (or have done), whether it is findings from research you conducted or key resources you developed. With state staff as the audience, the webinar also can be leveraged to recruit states to participate in your project's activities. You may want to present early in the project to provide an initial overview and share what is to come, and then again as the project is wrapping up to help with disseminating project work. After consulting with the project COR, please reach out to LINCS TAC to schedule a webinar date. The LINCS TAC team will then set up a time to meet with the project team to go over the following logistics and requirements:

1. Overview of webinar series
    a. Audience: state staff (and their invited guests).
    b. 1.5 hours in length:

3:00–3:05 p.m.	Welcome and introductions (LINCS team)
3:05–4:15 p.m.	Project presentation (project team)
4:15–4:20 p.m.	Q&A
4:20–4:30 p.m.	Wrap-up (LINCS TAC)

2. Slideshow logistics
    a. Guidance related to 508 compliance.
    b. Images should be from a publicly available source.
    c. LINCS TAC will provide the PPT template.

3. Timeline
    a. Due date for the slides
    b. Dry-run date
    c. Link to register for the webinar

In addition to preparing slides, please be prepared to provide the following to LINCS TAC:

- A title and two- to four-sentence description of your webinar
- A picture and two- to three-sentence biography for each of your presenters

LINCS Resource Collection

In addition to sharing resources on your Federal Initiatives page, adding your project's developed resources to the Resource Collection can be a great way to ensure that as many people as possible can find and access your work. To do that, you will need to develop a LINCS Resource Collection profile for each resource with the information required for the Resource Collection. More information on how to complete the Resource Collection Profile Form (Appendix E) and the information it will need to include can be found under "LINCS Resources" in the Starting Your Project section of this document.

LINCS Community

Throughout your project, you may be able to leverage the audience of the LINCS Community to share information about resources or publications your project has produced, recruit participants for upcoming events, or request feedback from LINCS Community members. Following are some ways that you might leverage the LINCS Community:

1. **Community Announcements** (https://community.lincs.ed.gov/announcements). The LINCS Community can post announcements that will be sent out to all members. You may use this option for event announcements, recruitment, or other items for dissemination to the broader LINCS Community. (Please see "Announcing Your Projects and LINCS Social Media" in the Starting Your Project section for required details.)
2. **Public Groups** (https://community.lincs.ed.gov/groups). Your project can always post relevant questions, comments, resources, or other information as discussions in relevant public groups to obtain input or feedback or to recruit participants for work on your Federal Initiative. Please keep in mind that you and any members who respond to your posts are required to follow the LINCS Community Code of Conduct at all times.
3. **Community Events**. As your project is engaged in providing TA and has resources or other information to share with the field, consider reaching out to the moderator of the community group(s) that most aligns with your work to coordinate an online live or asynchronous event where you can share details about your project, products produced, or

outcome data with community members. Note that you should reach out **at least 2 months** in advance to coordinate these events.

Communicating About Your Projects and Social Media

In the Starting Your Project section, guidance was provided on announcing your project to the field. As a reminder, the same guidance applies at this point in the project. Please refer to "Announcing Your Projects and LINCS Social Media" to make sure all final resources, tools, and materials are broadly shared with the field, leveraging LINCS.

LINCS was designed to organize and promote resources within the field of adult education and serve as a central repository for information. LINCS promotes resources through sharing announcements with all LINCS Community members and through leveraging the LINCS social media channels: X (formerly Twitter) (https://twitter.com/LINCS_ED), LinkedIn (https://linedin.com/groups/4555711/ LINCS_ED), and YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/LincsEd).

Social Media Technical Requirements

LINCS X (formerly known as Twitter)

LINCS X/Twitter (@LINCS_ED) allows for participants to easily be informed of resources and training opportunities offered through LINCS and share the opportunities with their network and colleagues. Great topics for social media posts include synchronous events, asynchronous discussions, newly released resources, and resources that connect to holidays or days of appreciation. The success of posts can be measured by a variety of analytical tools. These measurements include number of posts, reposts, impressions, likes, link clicks, replies, and new followers, as well as the engagement rate. There are four key strategies that can build engagement that may be displayed in these metrics. First, many of the best social media posts are brief. Although X/Twitter encourages a sense of brevity with a 280-character limit, some of the most effective tweets contain fewer than half that amount, registering between 71 and 100 characters. Second, be sure to have a clear call to action, such as registering for an event, submitting a resource or discussion post, or answering a question. Third, it is great to use visuals when possible. Please note: It is vital that the images chosen obey all copyright laws. Accordingly, sites such as Unsplash, Pixabay, and Pexels can be helpful, as they feature royalty-free stock images. Upon choosing an image, it is important that alt text of fewer than 1,000 characters be used to describe the visual and any text included in the image in detail. Finally, reach your audience by using appropriate hashtags. Twitter Explore is a great tool for finding trending hashtags. Please note, however, using only two or three hashtags is most effective.

LINCS LinkedIn

LINCS LinkedIn also presents opportunities for participants to stay up to date on the lates LINCS opportunities, resources, and events. Unlike Twitter, in which users are not required to have an account to see what is posted, LINCS LinkedIn operates as a group in which you must request to be accepted into the group. This also allows participants to share resources on the group page once they are vetted by the LINCS social media team. Analytics used to measure engagement are more limited than Twitter, but they include numbers of new and active members, posts, post views, comments, and reactions. Unlike Twitter, LinkedIn allows posts to be much longer, at 3,000 characters.

LINCS YouTube Channel

LINCS maintains a YouTube channel, under the username LINCS_ED (https://www.youtube.com/@LINCSED), which serves as a repository and viewing platform for video content from OCTAE-funded projects. As stated on the channel's "About" page, "Videos on the LINCS_ED Channel include webinars, live recordings, and other materials on OCTAE's national activities such as: career pathways; reentry education; educational technology; and more!" The collection also houses video components used in project toolkits, LINCS courses, and more. Videos from your project added to the LINCS channel can be organized into one or more project-specific playlists, making it easy for users to locate all resources related to the project. Depending on the type of content and how broad or narrow the scope, video visibility can be set to public (searchable) or unlisted (accessible only by direct link; protected within the project playlist). These scenarios may be further described as follows:

- Featured screencasts, recorded webinars, video-recorded seminars/conference talks; often included in a YouTube playlist (organized around a specific project or other theme) and promoted to the front of the LINCS YouTube channel (URL found above)
- Video content hosted via channel, but only exposed to the public via "embed code"; placed into various web resources (e.g., coursework content from the LINCS Learning Portal, special landing pages on lincs.ed.gov)

Video Technical Requirements

- Video is to be in raw (AVI) or WMV format (preference is for uncompressed/raw format).
- If the video is a recorded webinar or meeting, please convert it to the appropriate video format before delivering the video.
- Your project also must provide a transcription file of the video for use in YouTube captioning.

Video Justification Requirements

For the video to be housed on the LINCS YouTube channel, the following steps should be adhered to:

- The team member shall submit a request to OCTAE expressing their desire to post the video to the channel.
- The COR shall request access for the team member to obtain a LINCS YouTube account via the LINCS Wizard.
- The team member will be required to take the LINCS Program User Security Training and, upon completion of the training, will be given access to the LINCS YouTube channel.
- The team member shall upload the video to a playlist created for the project as an unlisted/private video. Please let the LINCS TAC team know the proposed title for the playlist; all project videos shall be posted to the designated playlist.
- The team member also shall upload a transcript for the video and ensure that closed captions are set and correct.
- The project team shall complete a 508-compliance checklist for the video and submit it to the COR for review. The project COR shall submit the approved checklist to the LINCS TAC and technical support CORs.
- The team member shall coordinate with OCTAE and the LINCS Technical Support Contractor on how the video will be made publicly available (i.e., playlist on channel home page versus embed code).
- The team member shall obtain final approval from OCTAE, at which time the LINCS technical team will coordinate and adjust the availability settings on the YouTube-hosted video.

LINCS Training Evaluation Form

LINCS uses an Office of Management and Budget (OMB)-approved training evaluation form that is used for other DAEL Federal Initiatives and training. The training evaluation form was updated and renewed in May 2023 and has an expiration date of May 31, 2026. The evaluation form can be found in Appendix L. LINCS uses similar evaluation forms for both online courses and TA/training. Please note that if you use this evaluation form for training during your project, you must include the public burden statement on the evaluation form. You also must use the evaluation form with its approved questions. If you wish to customize this evaluation form or create another one, you must work with your project COR to submit your evaluation form for OMB approval. Please note that LINCS is not responsible for collecting or analyzing the evaluation data during your project period.

Wrapping Up Your Project

It's been a great ride! You have accomplished many tasks on your project that will positively impact the field of adult education and improve opportunities for adult learners to succeed. This section includes important information to consider and plan for as you wrap up the project. Some information leveraged while implementing the project will continue in this phase, such as outreach and recruitment, announcements, and sharing the work of the project through the Resource Collection, LINCS Universal TA webinars, and the LINCS Community. This section also will provide content and technical guidance on the final details needed for course development, such as the QA review process, 508 compliance tips, loading content, communication plans for courses, creating course evaluations, and content needed to move courses live. If the project includes TA and training that will continue beyond the life of the project, this section provides information on LINCS trainers and the steps and logistics that project trainers should be aware of to become LINCS trainers.

LINCS Resources

No less than **1 month** before the end of the project, you should begin filling out the Resource Collection Profile Form (Appendix E) for the project resource profiles for the Resource Collection. These profiles will provide visitors to the LINCS Resource Collection with an overview of the resource to help them determine whether or not it will meet their need. You will need to allow more time if you have many resources, as you will need to submit one form per resource. See Appendix F for an example of what the resource's profile will look like once it has been added to LINCS. Please send completed forms to Marcela Movit at mmovit@air.org.

See Appendix M for the checklist for adding resources to the Resource Collection along with previous guidance on information needed to complete the Resource Collection Profile Form in the Starting Your Project section.

LINCS Universal TA Webinars

The LINCS Universal TA webinars present a unique opportunity to share the work of the project with state directors and staff. Please email the LINCS TAC team at training@lincs.ed.gov to schedule a project webinar date no less than **4 months** before the end of the contract. The LINCS TAC team will then set up a time to meet to go over the following webinar logistics and requirements:

1. Overview of webinar series
    a. Audience: state staff (and invited guests).
    b. 1.5 hours in length:

3:00–3:05 p.m.	Welcome and introductions (LINCS team)
3:05–4:15 p.m.	Project presentation (project team)
4:15–4:20 p.m.	Q&A
4:20–4:30 p.m.	Wrap-up (LINCS TAC)

2. Slideshow logistics
    a. Guidance related to 508 compliance.
    b. Images should be from a publicly available source.
    c. LINCS team will provide the PPT template.
3. Timeline
    a. Due date for the slides
    b. Dry-run date
    c. Link to register for the webinar

In addition to preparing slides, please be prepared to provide the following to LINCS TAC:

- A title and two- to four-sentence description for the webinar
- A picture and two- to three-sentence biography for each presenter

LINCS Trainers

The training developed and delivered from the project may continue to be accessible by the field beyond the life of the project. This section provides information on LINCS trainers and the steps and logistics that project trainers should be aware of to become LINCS trainers. There are specific steps for leveraging LINCS to provide targeted TA to ensure that training happens using the project's trainers to facilitate annual training cohorts. Targeted TA is high-value, intensive, short-term TA that is delivered to a small cohort of states grappling with similar issues. The LINCS TAC team believes this form of TA provides an ideal approach for providing states access to the training developed through OCTAE-funded Federal Initiatives. The project trainers will be required to participate in LINCS trainer onboarding for them to become official LINCS trainers in their project area of expertise.

The steps for how to onboard trainers/coaches from other Federal Initiatives to become LINCS trainers include the following:

Step 1: Completion of the Transitioning Technical Assistance and Trainers Form/Checklist

To help make the transition of the TA and training provided by your project to LINCS a smooth process, please complete the Transitioning Technical Assistance and Trainers Form/Checklist, found in Appendix K. It needs to be completed by you and approved and submitted by the project COR **90 days before the end of the project**. This form is intended to provide the LINCS team with an understanding of all the intricacies of the TA provided by your project to ensure a seamless continuation of the offerings to the field. This will include information such as:

- the project name;
- expected transition timing/date;
- current method for delivering TA;
- current time comment for delivering that TA;
- the number of trainers required for the TA;
- how much their trainers were paid;
- how the TA was advertised to the field and how recruitment occurred;
- how information was disseminated to participants;
- which trainers were most successful;
- if the training will need to be modified for the LINCS TAC to provide it to states and, if modified, how;
- how to access the training materials; and
- a description for the training catalog.

Step 2: Hiring of LINCS Trainers

We understand that each Federal Initiative has several coaches or trainers. However, when the training is offered through LINCS as part of the project’s three-tiered TA efforts, it is anticipated that up to one training cohort will be offered annually for each project. As such, not all trainers or coaches will be hired. Depending on how the TA is currently offered, LINCS will work with the COR from the transitioned project and the LINCS TAC COR to determine the number of trainers and/or coaches needed to successfully provide one TA cohort annually for each transitioned Federal Initiative. In alignment with other LINCS-targeted TA, there should be no more than two trainers and/or coaches. There may need to be some modifications to ensure that LINCS project resources are being applied efficiently across TA requests.

Once the number of trainers needed is decided, the LINCS TAC team will confer with the transitioning project team and CORs to develop a prioritized list of trainers and/or coaches for LINCS to hire. Based on the scope of the project, the project team and COR will provide a recommended trainers list. The list will be provided to LINCS as part of the Transitioning Technical Assistance and Trainers Form/Checklist (see Appendix K). Possible determining factors may include feedback from participants, observed ability to engage with and support participants, involvement with the development of the materials, content expertise, reliability, technology expertise, and general availability.

Step 3: Onboarding

The onboarding goal is to make the process as seamless as possible for any trainers and coaches related to a project to become part of the LINCS cadre of trainers. Trainers and coaches from these Federal Initiatives will already be highly skilled trainers on the project content. To this end, to orient these trainers/coaches to the LINCS three-tiered TA model, a LINCS Trainers Onboarding and Orientation Session will be provided for trainers and coaches joining the LINCS cadre of trainers from other Federal Initiatives. Currently, all newly hired LINCS trainers participate in a 90-minute virtual onboarding session. Topics covered include:

- a LINCS components overview;
- descriptions and expectations for what it means to be a trainer for LINCS;
- LINCS trainer considerations for diversity, equity, and inclusion and for online training;
- logistics for providing the LINCS TA and training, including how TA is requested and how the trainers or coaches are hired; and
- how and when to invoice for TA payment.

In addition to these topics, training for trainers from other Federal Initiatives will include:

- discussions of any modifications from the way the training was previously offered to how it is offered now;
- how to access and use LINCS communities of practice (CoPs) for the TA; and
- supports provided to LINCS trainers (e.g., receiving materials, setting up a CoP in LINCS, conducting the LINCS TA evaluations, signing in participants).

With these additional onboarding and orientation topics, it is anticipated that the virtual session will be 2 hours. This onboarding and orientation is mandatory for any trainer or coach recommended for LINCS trainer hiring (see below) who is transitioning from a Federal Initiative to becoming a LINCS trainer. Currently, trainers receive a small honorarium for attending the training. Depending on the timing of when Federal Initiatives transition, the onboarding and orientation session may be conducted for each project separately or for more than one project at a time.

LINCS Community

In the final months or closeout period or your Federal Initiative, again, you are welcome to use the LINCS Community to share results, findings, or final information about your initiative through the following:

- **Community Announcements**. Use the LINCS Community to post announcements to all members sharing details of a final project webinar, report, or other closing details. (Please see details under Starting Your Project: Announcing Your Project.)
- **Community Events**. If you would like to use the LINCS group events to share final project results with a specific group aligned with your topics, consider reaching out to the moderator to coordinate an online live or asynchronous event where you can share details about your project with community members. Note that you should reach out at least **2 months** in advance to coordinate these events.

LINCS Course Development: The Details

One year prior to the planned course launch, project staff should request a Scoping Meeting with the LINCS TAC team to discuss course development.

Levels of Review

Multiple levels of review are required as courses are developed. The levels of review are as follows:

- **Storyboard and Handouts**. This is the initial review in course development after the course outline is approved. The project COR will need to review a storyboard of the course (can be done via PPT, Canva, or other software, but it is not recommended to use Google products) and draft handouts as Word docs (these can be submitted separately if needed, with the storyboard first and then the storyboard and handouts if there will be more than one draft review).
  - The project COR will leave comments within the storyboard and Word docs.
  - Project staff should not embed videos, as that will make the file too big to send to the project COR (videos should be linked, if applicable).
- **Video Scripts**. Any unique video scripts also will need to be reviewed with narrator voice samples for the project COR to select from (this does not apply if you are using extant videos). If you are using external videos, please retain a file to verify that permission was granted to use the video and include the following disclaimer:
  The course may contain resources by a third party outside of the Department of Education. As such, the Department is not responsible for its content, nor can it guarantee it is accessible in accordance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you need access to an accessible version, please reach out to the third-party vendor for assistance.
- **Moodle Course Initial Review**. At this level of review, project staff should provide access to the course build in Moodle with links to content.
  - Course developers should use caution when using H5P components in Moodle, as most of the H5P options have not been tested and approved by ITAP. The following H5P options have been approved by ITAP: Accordion, Quiz (Question Set), and True/False Question. The following H5P components were tested by ITAP and did not pass accessibility analysis: Advanced Fill in the Blanks, Branching Scenario (beta),

Course Presentation, Documentation Tool, Essay, Interactive Book, Interactive Video, and Timeline. All other H5P components not listed in this paragraph will require ITAP review and approval before use in LINCS Moodle.

    - If you are using Articulate, provide the links to the review files to the project COR. Feedback and comments can be provided in Articulate during the review.
    - If you are not using Articulate, then provide the project COR with a way to share comments on the content.
    - Handouts plugged in as PDFs should be linked in Moodle (handout links should be in the appropriate places).
    - A feedback document should be available for comments on Moodle content and handouts inclusive of any revisions made.
- **Moodle Course Final Review**. The final course build review will occur when the course is fully built in Moodle. At this review point:
    - Articulate files (if applicable) have been uploaded as HTML.
    - Handouts are 508-compliant PDFs that have been uploaded to the LINCS server to allow the creation of links for the handouts. A Wizard ticket requesting the handout links will need to be created.
    - Feedback has been incorporated into materials and all revisions are complete.
    - Certificates of completion have been added to the course.
    - A link to the course evaluation has been added to the course. The link to the survey can be found here: https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6221234/LINCS-Training-Evaluation.
- Information Technology Accessibility Program Review
    - The project COR will submit the ITAP review request for the course once the previous review level is complete. Please provide the COR with the name of the course and a link to the course.
    - Enroll the following user into the course: “LINCS508 Reviewer.”
- Quality Assurance Checklist Review
    - The QA checklist should be completed and submitted to the project COR, who also should conduct a QA checklist review using the same tool prior to submitting the combined QA checklist to the LINCS TAC and LINCS Technical Support CORs.
- **Source Files Submission**. At this final review before the course is moved to production, all course source files (i.e., Articulate files, PDFs, Word documents, original storyboard content) should be provided to the LINCS TAC and LINCS Technical Support Teams. This can be done using file transfer software. The files will be used to update the course if needed in future years.

Transitioning the Course From Development to Production

The final step before the course is made live to the public is to transition the course from development to production. Following are the steps to do that:

- Contact LINCS TAC at training@lincs.ed.gov to have your courses added to the course evaluation survey.
- Provide final 508 approval from ITAP to support@lincs.ed.gov and a timeline for the course to move to production **2 weeks** prior to the scheduled time for the course to be moved to production.
- Submit a “Copy Existing Course Request” Wizard ticket and include the following information:
  - **Existing Course Title**: The title of the course to be copied
  - **Existing Course URL**: A link to the course to be copied
  - Which site is it being copied to? Live or development
  - **New Course Title**: The title of the new course (please limit your course title to 60 characters, including spaces)
  - **New Course Category**: Categories are used to group similar courses together. Some examples include Career Pathways, Disabilities and Equitable Outcomes, and English Language Acquisition. See https://courses.lincs.ed.gov for a complete list.
  - **New Course Description**: This description will be displayed on the course page.
  - **Completion Hours**: Number of hours to be displayed on the course completion certificates
  - **Is the new course self-paced or facilitated?** If facilitated, please supply the following additional information:
    - **Course Enrollment**: Choose between manual enrollment and self-enrollment
    - **Course Start Date**: Only if applicable
    - **Course End Date**: Only if applicable
    - **Teacher/Facilitator Name and Email**:
    - **Has the course facilitator completed LINCS Program User Security training?** Yes or no
    - **Secondary Course Lead (i.e., Nonediting Teacher) Name and Email**:
    - **Has the secondary course lead completed LINCS Program User Security training?** Yes or no
- Provide a dissemination memo to LINCS TAC to include the following:
  - LINCS Community announcements
  - Social media posts with applicable images (include alt text for all images)
- Provide course descriptions and hours of completion for the following pages:
  - Main Courses Page
  - Static Page
  - LINCS Learning Portal Courses Page
  - Training Catalog

Announcements and Social Media

As the project is wrapping up, announcements and social media dissemination should have already begun. At this point, announcements for final resources may be shared with the field. For a reminder and guidance on announcements and social media, please see “Announcing Your Projects and LINCS Social Media” under the Starting Your Project section.

Conclusion

In many ways, LINCS is seen as the umbrella for national leadership activities, as former and current national leadership activities are housed throughout LINCS sites. Through creating the FIT, the LINCS TAC team hopes to ease the process for project teams hoping to successfully transition their materials and training to LINCS. The easy-to-use checklists, fillable templates, and various project tools make the FIT a valuable resource for Federal Initiatives, from the beginning of their projects through the end. The LINCS TAC team encourages you to use the guidance in the FIT to create a project timeline for engaging with LINCS over the period of performance for your project. The LINCS Engagement Project Timeline can be found in Appendix A.

The FIT is a helpful and supportive document whose use is highly recommended, as all steps and processes outlined throughout the document, in some form or variation, will be required of projects. The LINCS team looks forward to working collaboratively with the LINCS TAC COR, along with the national activities project teams and their CORs, to provide support to these national activities.

Appendices

Appendix A. LINCS Engagement Project Timeline

Please use the timeline below to identify when to engage and connect with the LINCS team and as a guide for completing these tasks.

Task (check when done)	Timeline	Date to Complete the Task for Your Project
Starting Your Project		
☐ Schedule the Scoping Meeting.	Within 60 days of the project start date	
☐ Complete the Starting Your Project Questionnaire and share it with the LINCS Technical Assistance Center (TAC) project director.	At least 2 weeks ahead of the Scoping Meeting	
☐ Identify key staff members to complete LINCS Program User Security Training (e.g., course developers, Federal Initiatives page developers).	Within 60 days of the project start date	
☐ Share the project's LINCS communication plan for each event.	No later than 2 weeks ahead of the requested dissemination date	
☐ Develop and prepare for publication the project's Federal Initiatives page(s).	Within 90 days of the project start date	
Implementing Your Project		
☐ Share the project's LINCS communication plan for each event.	No later than 2 weeks ahead of the requested dissemination date	
☐ Send announcement requests to the LINCS TAC contracting officer's representative (COR).	At least 2 weeks prior to the requested posting date	
☐ Reach out to community moderators to plan a community event.	At least 2 months before you would like the event to take place	
☐ Send requests to present a Universal Technical Assistance (TA) webinar to training@lincs.ed.gov.	At least 4 months before you would like the webinar to take place	

Task (check when done)	Timeline	Date to Complete the Task for Your Project
☐ Submit a [Wizard ticket,](#) along with the 508 approval report, confirming that 508 compliance approval has been obtained for a new course and that the course is ready to be moved into production and published.	At least 2 weeks before the course is to be published	
Wrapping Up Your Project		
☐ Send announcement requests to the LINCS TAC COR.	At least 2 weeks prior to the requested posting date	
☐ Send a request to present a Universal TA webinar to training@lincs.ed.gov.	No later than 4 months before the end of the project	
☐ Submit the Transitioning TA and Trainer Form/Checklist.	No later than 90 days before the end of the project	
☐ Submit resource profiles for the Resource Collection.	At least 1 month before the end of the contract	
☐ Submit a [Wizard ticket,](#) along with the 508 approval report, confirming that 508 compliance approval has been obtained for a new course and that the course is ready to be moved into production and published.	At least 2 weeks before the course is to be published	

Appendix B. Scoping Meeting Questionnaire

Please complete this questionnaire **2 weeks** ahead of the Scoping Meeting.

General Questions

Name of project, contractor number and contact information, and contracting officer's representative (COR)

Overview of project:
What is the period of performance for your project?

Please share major deliverables that will impact LINCS.

Who on your team has completed the LINCS Program User Security Training? Who else will need to complete the LINCS Program User Security Training and for what purpose?

Resource Collection

What materials/resources will your project add to the Resource Collection? When will this occur?

What is the timeline for having your project materials ready for LINCS?

Learning Portal

Do you intend to have online courses added to LINCS through your project?

When will this occur?

Federal Initiatives Page

Who will be the team member needing content management system access to develop your Federal Initiatives page?

Do you have any questions on the Federal Initiatives page requirements? (See the Federal Initiatives page checklist in Appendix D.)

LINCS Community

How does your project plan to leverage the LINCS Community? When will this occur?

LINCS State Resources/Training

Will ongoing training be an outcome of your project that will need to be supported by LINCS?

What is the timeline for having your project materials ready for LINCS?

Do you see any work of the project being useful throughout implementation as a Universal Technical Assistance (TA) topic?

Announcements and Social Media

How will you need LINCS to help amplify the work of your project (e.g., webinars, recruitment) through Community announcements and Twitter/LinkedIn posts?

Appendix C. Federal Initiative Page Template

Project Title (no more than 50 characters and spaces)

Optional: Project logo

Project Description

Provide a brief, high-level summary of the project in four to seven sentences. This should include the length of the project/period of performance and opportunities to engage with the project; it also may include the organization managing the project.

Project Objectives

Describe the goals, purpose, benefits, projected outcomes, and so on.

Project Timeline

Include important project dates, such as webinars, events, training dates, recruitment deadlines, and so on.

Project Resources

List links to ancillary project pages, supporting project documents, videos, and so on.

Appendix D. Checklist for Creating a LINCS Federal Initiatives Page

Task (check when done)	Person Responsible	Due Date
☐ Review the task with the contracting officer's representative (COR) and determine what resources, products, courses, and so on will be used on the LINCS Federal Initiatives page.	Project director	
☐ Plan a meeting with the LINCS team to review the Toolkit Checklist.	Project director	
☐ Consult the Federal Initiatives page section of this toolkit (under Starting Your Project) to identify page content (including resources) and create a visual draft. Include the project page outline/navigation (main page and subpages).	Project director	
☐ Coordinate with the LINCS Technical Support Contractor to determine if any concerns exist regarding placement and organization of proposed resources (e.g., videos, online courses, documents). (Note: Please do not use JavaScript, CSS, or iframes.)	Project director	
☐ Present draft page content for COR approval.	Project director	
☐ Revise the proposed page draft, as needed.	Project director/Team member	
☐ Identify the team member with web page development skills.	Project director/Team member	
☐ Complete Program User Security Training (for the web development team member) to gain access to the content management system.	Web development team member	
☐ Request that the COR for the LINCS Technical Support Contractor create the page.	Project director	
☐ Update the unpublished page using approved content.	Web development team member	
☐ Present the unpublished version of the page to the COR for review and approval.	Project director	
☐ Publish the page.	LINCS Technical Contractor	
☐ Create an announcement sharing the news about the newly published Federal Initiatives page for the LINCS Technical Assistance Center (TAC) team to post.	Project director	
☐ Share the announcement with the project COR for review and approval and send it to the LINCS TAC COR to announce.	Project director	

Appendix E. Resource Collection Profile Form

Resource Title	
Resource Type	Choose an item.
Product Type	Choose an item.
Description	
Author(s)	
Author(s) Organizational Affiliation	
Publication Month	
Publication Year	
Website URL (include http:// or https://)	
Related Topic	Choose an item.
Resource Type	
Keywords	
Product Type	Choose an item.

Image (8 MB limit; must be larger than 450 x 1 pixels; allowed file types: png, gif, jpg, and jpeg)	[Please send as a separate attachment.]
Abstract	
Keywords	
Number of pages (if applicable); does not include cover, title, glossary, and appendices	
Target Audience	
Skill Level (can be more than one)	Choose an item.; Choose an item.; Choose an item.; Choose an item.
Benefits and Uses	
Required Training	

Appendix F. Example of a Completed Resource Profile From the Resource Collection

Integrated Education and Training (IET) in Corrections: A Companion Guide to the IET Design Toolkit

This guide summarizes considerations, tools, and examples that can be used by state and facility administrators and instructors as they develop and implement IET programs in jails and prisons.

Resource URL
https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/iet-corrections-guide.pdf

Author(s)
Laura Rasmussen Foster
Jessie Stadd
Michelle Tolbert

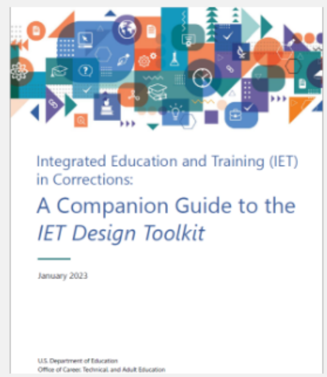
Author(s) Organizational Affiliation
RTI International

Publication Year
2023

Resource Type
Informational Material

Key Words
Correctional Education
Reentry (Education)
Integrated Education and Training
Program Management
Program Implementation
Contextualized Instruction

Number of Pages
28



VIEW RESOURCE

Related Topics

Correctional and Reentry Education

Product Type

Informational Material
Toolkit

Target Audience

Administrators
Instructional Staff
Policymakers and Implementers

Abstract

When aligned with career pathways and other education and training programs in the community, IET programs offered in prisons and jails enable participants to make significant progress toward their education and training goals that can be continued after release. This guide summarizes lessons learned from the IET in Corrections project and serves as a companion to the IET Design Toolkit. It offers considerations, tools, and examples for planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating IET programs in prisons and jails, designed to supplement the guidance provided in the Toolkit.

Benefits and Uses

IET programs continue to gain momentum in adult education as a strategy for combining adult education and literacy, workforce training, and workforce preparation to offer contextualized instruction for learners. Since 2020, OCTAE has supported the development and implementation of IET programs in prisons and jails to help address the foundational and occupational skill needs of adults impacted by incarceration. IET offers important benefits to correctional education participants, such as accelerated learning, access to career pathways, and contextualized instruction. This guide summarizes lessons learned from early experiences developing IET programs for correctional education settings and can help correctional education staff to apply IET guidance to their specific context.

The guide also is being used to support OCTAE's recent project designed to provide technical assistance (TA) to 36 states as they develop and implement IET programs

Appendix G. Sample Social Media Posts and Announcement

Challenge hashtag: #FutureFinder

Challenge web presence: FutureFinderChallenge.com

Social graphics: Attached separately with alternative (alt) text as needed

LINCS Social Media

See below sample social media messages and suggested timing for sharing from the following LINCS channels:

LINCS Twitter

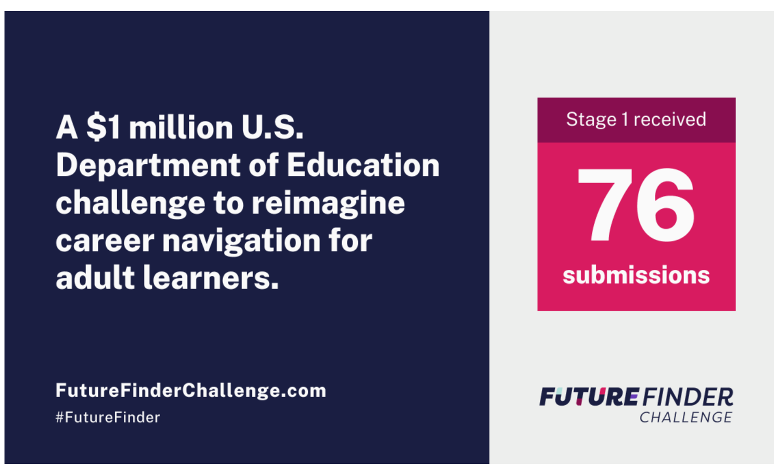
LINCS LinkedIn

Twitter

Stage 1 of @usedgov's $1 million #FutureFinder Challenge received 76 submissions from teams with expertise across #edtech and #adulted. Read more about the range of tools and the experts reviewing them:

https://www.futurefinderchallenge.com/stage-1-receives-76-submissions/?utm_source=LINCS&utm_medium=social-short&utm_campaign=S1-launch

<insert FutureFinder_Submissions Graphic.png>



Alt text: The following text is written on a navy and gray background: A $1 million U.S. Department of Education challenge to reimagine career navigation for adult learners. Stage 1 received 76 submissions.

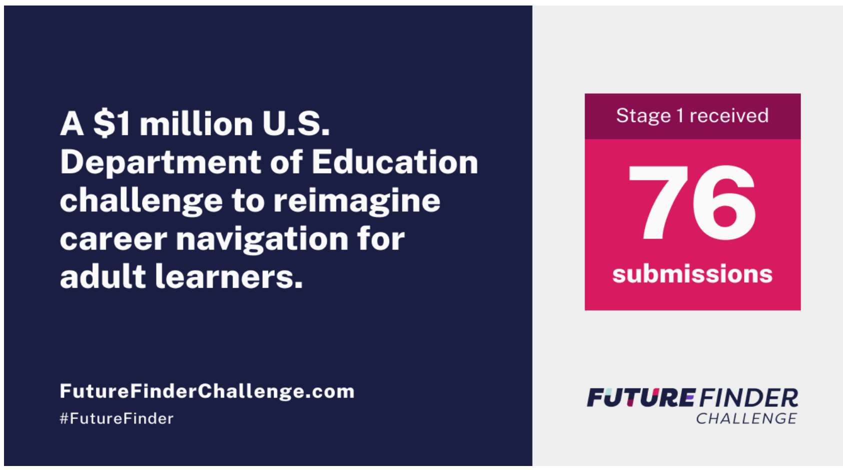
LinkedIn

ICYMI: Stage 1 of the @U.S. Department of Education's $1 million #FutureFinder Challenge received 76 submissions from teams with expertise across #adulted, #edtech, #appdesign, #careernavigation, and #workforcedevelopment.

Read more about the range of solutions and the experts reviewing them:

https://www.futurefinderchallenge.com/stage-1-receives-76-submissions/?utm_source=LINCS&utm_medium=social-long&utm_campaign=S1-launch

<insert FutureFinder_Submissions Graphic.png>



Alt text: The following text is written on a navy and gray background: A $1 million U.S. Department of Education challenge to reimagine career navigation for adult learners. Stage 1 received 76 submissions.

LINCS Sitewide Announcement

See below for suggested language for a LINCS announcement:

Subject line:
U.S. Department of Education's Future Finder Challenge receives 76 submissions

Body:
This fall, the U.S. Department of Education launched Stage 1 of the Future Finder Challenge, a $1 million challenge to reimagine career navigation for adult learners.

Entrants submitted 76 prototypes of digital tools designed to meet adult learners' unique needs. Teams bring expertise in fields including edtech, app design, and workforce development.

Eligible submissions are now being scored by reviewers and judges with expertise spanning adult education, career navigation, edtech, industry, and inclusion and accessibility. Read more about the range of innovative tools and the experts evaluating them.

To learn more about the challenge, visit FutureFinderChallenge.com and subscribe to the Challenge newsletter.

Appendix H. YouTube Video Upload Checklist

Name of person uploading: ____

Email of person uploading: ____

Name of video: ____

Name of playlist to add video to: _______________________________________

Upload work start date: ____

Upload work end date: ____

Publicly accessible video URL (fill in when all done): _______________________

Ensure the Video Is in a YouTube Acceptable Format

☐ Convert your video into a YouTube acceptable format, if it is not already.

☐ The list of acceptable formats can be found here: http://support.google.com/youtube/bin/static.py?hl=en&ts=2888402&page=ts.cs.

☐ You can use Any Video Converter or another similar free converter to convert your video to an acceptable format.

☐ For best video quality, make sure the video is in a 16:9 ratio format and the bit rate is set to an appropriate bit rate. Again, you can use Any Video Converter or another similar free converter to do this. For more information, visit the following YouTube support page: http://support.google.com/youtube/bin/answer.py?hl=en-GB&answer=1722171.

Upload the Video to YouTube

☐ Click the Upload button from within the LINCS_ED channel.

☐ Choose the video to upload.

☐ Set Privacy Settings to unlisted.

☐ Add tags as desired.

☐ Add a description of the video.

☐ Set the category to Education.

Disable Comments and Video Responses

☐ Click the Upload button from within the LINCS_ED channel.

☐ Choose the video to upload.

☐ Set Privacy Settings to unlisted.

☐ Add tags as desired.

☐ Add a description of the video.

☐ Set the category to Education.

Disable Video Ratings

☐ Under Advanced Settings for a video, uncheck “Users can view ratings for this video.”

☐ Click Save.

Convert Automated Captions to Manual Captions or Upload the Transcript (the file containing the text version of video content but no associated timing information)

Convert Automated Captions to Manual Captions

☐ After uploading the video, wait until automatic captions have been added. This can take several hours.

☐ Under Video Manager, select the video to caption.

☐ Select Captions.

☐ When Automated Captioning is complete, “English - automatic captions” should show up on the right-hand side of the page. If it has not yet shown up, wait 30 minutes and check again.

☐ Click “English - automatic captions” after it shows up.

☐ Play the video and fix any captions that need to be fixed, pausing and starting the video as necessary.

☐ When done, select Done.

☐ The updated captions will be saved as a new manual captions file.

☐ View the video with the manually updated captions turned on to verify that the captions are working properly.

Upload Transcript

Please note that transcripts must be in plain text, so a Word document is NOT acceptable; the content must be moved to a .txt file (used by Notepad) or other plain text file.

- ☐ Under Video Manager, click the video associated with the transcript. The video's main editing page should appear.
- ☐ Click Captions from the menu bar above the video.
- ☐ Click Upload Caption File or Transcript.
- ☐ Select the appropriate transcript file. See the "Transcript Files" section on the following page to view the acceptable format information for transcript files: http://support.google.com/youtube/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=166810.
- ☐ You will be asked whether the file you are uploading is a Caption File or Transcript File. Select Transcript File.
- ☐ Type in "Subtitles" for the Track Name.
- ☐ Click Upload to upload the file.
- ☐ After processing is complete, the track should show up under your captions options when playing the file.
- ☐ View the video with the transcript-created captions turned on to verify that the captions are working properly.

Disable Automated Captions

- ☐ Follow the steps outlined under Automated Captions here: https://support.google.com/youtube/bin/static.py?hl=en&topic=2734793&guide=2734661&page=guide.cs&answer=2734701.

Request Section 508 Compliance Review of the Video (or Set of Videos)

- ☐ Through the OCTAE contracting officer's representative, request 508 compliance review for the video(s) and captions. See the above guidance on 508 compliance steps along with the Technical Compliance Checklist (Appendix J).

Once the Video is Properly Captioned and Has Been Approved, Make the Video Public

- ☐ Under Video Manager, select the video to edit.
- ☐ Under the "Basic Info" section for the video, set Privacy Settings to Public.

Adding YouTube Videos to Content Pages on LINCS Sites

- ☐ Go to the link for the YouTube video you wish to add.
- ☐ Click “Share,” then select “Embed.” Copy the code snippet provided.
- ☐ As you are editing the content page on the LINCS site, click the “Source” button on the text editor.
- ☐ Paste the code snippet in the area you wish to embed the video.

Appendix I. Technical Quality Assurance Checklist for Courses

The checklist below provides the comments and questions included in the QA Checklist. It can be used for advanced preparation to complete the QA Checklist. For the final course reviews (from the project contracting officer's representative [COR], the LINCS Technical Assistance Center (TAC) COR, and the LINCS Technical Support Contractor), please complete the checklist in the spreadsheet and provide it to them as an attachment.

Course Title

☐ Full and abbreviated names of course are both correct. (Course titles should be 55 or fewer characters, including spaces.)

Course title	Full and abbreviated name of course are both correct. *(Course Titles should be 55 Characters including Spaces or less.)*

General User Experience

☐ The course does not open in a pop-up window; no unnecessary pop-ups in general.

☐ The course description lists a time estimate, which matches the certificate.

☐ Participants can easily view course sections and see which portions of the course are complete versus remaining.

☐ If there are mandatory versus optional portions of the course, the differentiation is noted to the user within the help text.

☐ If the course format includes collapsed sections, some introductory text explains that sections can be expanded.

☐ If clicking a link is mandatory for participants, this is shown clearly and/or indicated in the text.

☐ If clicking a link opens in a new window, this is marked or explained to participants.

☐ Any requirement that is external to the course (e.g., downloading a file or completing an exercise on a different website) is explained in detail, with explicit steps for completion.

☐ If a community group membership is required or even suggested (e.g., posting a comment to a community group, creating a lesson plan), instructions for how to join the community and/or the appropriate group are shown at start of course so that participants are not trying to join on the day that their certificate is due.

☐ Users can readily navigate courses using the little blue arrows provided within Moodle. At the end of each section, the course instructs the user to click the final blue vertical arrow to mark the section as complete.

General user experience	Course does not open in a pop-up window; no unnecessary pop-ups in general.
	Course description lists a time estimate, and time estimate matches certificate.
	Participants can easily view course sections and see which portions of the course are complete vs. remaining.
	If there are mandatory vs. optional portions of the course, the differentiation is noted to the user within help text.
	If course format includes collapsed sections, some introductory text explains that sections can be expanded.
	If clicking a link is mandatory for participants, this is shown clearly and/or indicated in text.
	If clicking a link opens in a new window, this is marked or explained to participants.
	Any requirement that is external to the course (for instance, downloading a file or completing an exercise on a different website) is explained in detail, with explicit steps to completion.
	If a Community group membership is required or even suggested (for instance, posting a comment to a Community group, or creating a lesson plan), instructions for how to join Community and/or the appropriate group are shown at start of course so that participants aren't trying to join on the day that their certificate is due.
	Users can readily navigate courses using the little blue arrows provided within Moodle. At the end of each section, the course instructs the user to click the final blue vertical arrow in order to mark the section as complete.

Course Functionality

☐ Completion checkboxes are not click complete-able by participants unless they are intended to be. (If they are intended to be clicked and completed by course-takers, the text in the course segment/title says so.)

☐ Any attached files (e.g., PDFs, PPTs) work for various operating system/browser combinations.

☐ Any attached files (e.g., PDFs, PPTs) are Section 508-approved. Please provide the 508 approval email.

☐ All links work and seem likely to continue working for the foreseeable future (i.e., they point to relatively stable website locations).

☐ The "Next" button is readily visible within the course; it is not blocked or obscured by the course frame within the browser.

Course functionality	Completion checkboxes are not click-complete-able by participants, unless intended to be. (And, if they're intended to be clicked-complete by course-takers, text in course segment/title says so.)
	Any attached files (PDFs, PPTs, etc) work for various OS/browser combinations.
	Any attached files (PDFs, PPTs, etc) are 508-approved. Please provide 508-approval email.
	All links work (and seem likely to continue working for the foreseeable future, i.e. they point to relatively stable website locations)
	"Next" button is readily visible within course; is not blocked or obscured by course frame within browser.

Grading and Completion Certificates

☐ Grade parameters are set for required sections.

☐ Quiz scores are graded accurately, and achieving a score within the appropriate parameters does not block a user from being awarded their certificate.

☐ The certificate shows the course name correctly.

☐ Requirements for the certificate are clearly visible to the user.

☐ Requirements for the certificate are correct.

☐ The certificate is complete, with the time estimate.

☐ Add text and a link for the LINCS Training Evaluation.

Grading and completion certificates	Grade parameters are set for required sections.
	Quiz scores are graded accurately, and achieving a score within the appropriate parameters does not block a user from being awarded their certificate.
	Certificate shows course name correctly.
	Requirements for certificate are clearly visible to user.
	Requirements for certificate are correct.
	Certificate is complete, with time estimate.
	Add text and a link for the LINCS Survey.

Outdated and Unnecessary

☐ No Flash content whatsoever is included in the course.

Outdated and unnecessary	No Flash content whatsoever is included in the course

Facilitated Courses

☐ Steps or actions that require instructor approval or action are clearly marked as such, and this is visible to both the instructor and student.

☐ Course start and end dates and visibility are known and communicated to the deployment team (if start and end dates exist).

☐ Course start and end dates are shown clearly to the user (if start and end dates exist).

☐ Information on how to contact the facilitator is available and clearly shown.

Facilitated courses	Steps or actions which require instructor approval or action are clearly marked as such, and this is visible to both instructor and student.
	Course start and end date and visibility are known and communicated to deployment team (if start and end date exist).
	Course start and end date are shown clearly to user (if start and end date exist).
	Information on how to contact facilitator is available and clearly shown.

Appendix J. Technical Compliance Checklist

Below are the conditions that will ensure that resources are accessible to all users. You also can find the Excel version of the form here.

Reviewer Name: ____

Review Environment: ____

Operating System: ____

Browser: ____

Compatibility View: ____

Additional Note:

If the linked or embedded file(s) is not owned by the agency, there must be an attempt to retrieve an accessible version from the content owner.

Resources:

For more information about each failure, please view the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) at http://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG20/quickref/.

Results

Guidelines	WCAG Ref #(s)	Failure Conditions	Results	Failure Details (provide screen/location)
Best Practices	N/A	Where no method exists to correct content so that it meets the requirements, an alternate version is provided. If the statement is false, contact your Section 508 program team for alternate content options.		
	N/A	Where the document links to or embeds another file, an appropriate checklist has been provided for each link or attachment.		
<u>1.1—Text Alternatives</u> **Nontext Content**	1.1.1	All images, form image buttons, and image map hot spots have appropriate, concise alternative (alt) text.		
	1.1.1	Images that do not convey content, are decorative, or include content that is already conveyed in text are given null alt text (alt="").		
	1.1.1	Equivalent alternatives to complex images are provided in context or on a separate page (linked and/or referenced via a longdesc attribute).		
	1.1.1	Embedded multimedia is identified via accessible text.		
	1.1.1	Frames are appropriately titled.		
	1.1.1	Content intended to be hidden from all users also is hidden from assistive technology.		
	1.1.1	Animated content has an alternative or is described in text.		
	1.1.1	CAPTCHAs are accessible in visual and audible formats.		

Guidelines	WCAG Ref #(s)	Failure Conditions	Results	Failure Details (provide screen/location)
	1.1.1	Textual alternative information is updated when an element's state changes.		
1.2—Time-Based Media	1.1.1, 1.2.#	Where media content is present or embedded, the checkpoints on the Time-Based Media Worksheet are compliant.		
1.3—Adaptable Info and Relationships	1.3.1	Semantic markup is used appropriately to designate headings (<h1>), lists (, , and <dl>), and emphasized or special text (e.g., <strong>, <code>, <abbr>, <blockquote>).		
	1.3.1	Tables are used for tabular data, and data are contained in separate data cells.		
	1.3.1	Data table headers are appropriately identified (e.g., TH for simple tables, the header's attribute for complex tables).		
	1.3.1	Data cells are associated with their headers (e.g., scope for simple tables or headers, IDs for complex tables).		
	1.3.1	Data table captions and summaries are used where appropriate.		
	1.3.1	Layout tables identify their purpose and do not contain structural markup.		
	1.3.1	Text labels are associated with form input elements.		
	1.3.1	Related form elements are grouped with the fieldset/legend.		
	1.3.1	Elements with multiple labels are provided in a meaningful order.		

Guidelines	WCAG Ref #(s)	Failure Conditions	Results	Failure Details (provide screen/location)
Meaningful Sequence	1.3.2	The reading and navigation order (determined by the code order) is logical and intuitive.		
	1.3.2	Menus, simulated dialogs, calendar pickers, and dynamic content are rendered inline with the controls that spawn them.		
Sensory Characteristics	1.3.3	Instructions do not rely upon shape, size, or visual location (e.g., "Click the square icon to continue" or "Instructions are in the right-hand column").		
	1.3.3	Instructions do not rely on sound (e.g., "A beeping sound indicates you may continue").		
1.4— Distinguishable Use of Color	1.4.1	Color is not used as the sole method of conveying content or distinguishing visual elements.		
	1.4.1	Color alone is not used to distinguish links from surrounding text unless the luminance contrast between the link and the surrounding text is at least 3:1 and an additional differentiation (e.g., it becomes underlined) is provided when the link is hovered over or receives focus.		
	1.4.1	Nontext content (e.g., images) uses patterns to convey the same information as color.		
Audio Control	1.4.2	A mechanism is provided to stop, pause, mute, or adjust volume for audio from multimedia or animation that automatically plays in software for more than 3 seconds.		
Contrast (Minimum)	1.4.3	Text and images of text have a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1.		

Guidelines	WCAG Ref #(s)	Failure Conditions	Results	Failure Details (provide screen/location)
Resize Text	1.4.4	The page is readable and functional when the text size is doubled.		
Images of Text	1.4.5	If the same visual presentation can be made using text alone, an image is not used to present that text.		
2.1—Keyboard Accessible **Keyboard**	2.1.1	All page functionality is available using the keyboard unless the functionality cannot be accomplished in any known way using a keyboard (e.g., freehand drawing).		
	2.1.1	Page-specified shortcut keys and access keys (access keys should typically be avoided) do not conflict with existing browser and screen-reader shortcuts.		
	2.1.1	All functionality of the content is operable without requiring specific timing for individual keystrokes.		
	2.1.1	Device-dependent event handlers are avoided.		
No Keyboard Trap	2.1.2	Keyboard focus is never locked or trapped at one particular page element. The user can navigate to and from all navigable page elements (e.g., embedded objects) using only a keyboard.		
2.2—Enough Time **Timing Adjustable**	2.2.1	If a page or application has a time limit, the user is given options to turn off, adjust, or extend that time limit. This is not a requirement for real-time events (e.g., an auction), where the time limit is absolutely required or if the time limit is longer than 20 hours.		

Guidelines	WCAG Ref #(s)	Failure Conditions	Results	Failure Details (provide screen/location)
Pause, Stop, or Hide	2.2.2	Automatically moving, blinking, or scrolling content (e.g., multimedia, animation) that lasts longer than 5 seconds can be paused, stopped, or hidden by the user. Moving, blinking, or scrolling can be used to draw attention to or highlight content as long as it lasts less than 5 seconds.		
	2.2.2	Automatically updating content (e.g., automatically redirecting or refreshing a page, news ticker, AJAX updated field, notification alert) can be paused, stopped, or hidden by the user or the user can manually control the timing of the updates.		
<u>2.3—Seizures</u> **Three Flashes or Below Threshold**	2.3.1	No page content flashes more than three times per second unless that flashing content is sufficiently small and the flashes are of low contrast and do not contain too much red. (See general flash and red flash thresholds.)		
<u>2.4—Navigable</u> **Bypass Blocks (2.4.1 does not apply to software)**	2.4.1	A link is provided to skip navigation and other page elements that are repeated across web pages.		
	2.4.1	If a page has a proper heading structure, this may be considered a sufficient technique instead of a "Skip to main content" link.		
	2.4.1	If a page uses frames and the frames are appropriately titled, this is a sufficient technique for bypassing individual frames.		

Guidelines	WCAG Ref #(s)	Failure Conditions	Results	Failure Details (provide screen/location)
Page Titles	2.4.2	The web page has a descriptive and informative page title.		
Focus Order	2.4.3	The navigation order of links, form elements, and so on is logical and intuitive.		
	2.4.3	The keyboard focus moves to and returns from elements appropriately. This includes the opening or appearance and closing of menus, dialogs, calendars, and so on.		
Link Purpose (in Context)	2.4.4	The purpose of each link (or form image button or image map hotspot) can be determined from the link text alone or from the link text and its context (e.g., surrounding paragraph, list item, table cell, table headers).		
	2.4.4	Links (or form image buttons) with the same text that go to different locations are readily distinguishable.		
Multiple Ways (does not apply to software)	2.4.5	Multiple ways (at least two of the following) are available to find other web pages on the site: a list of related pages, table of contents, site map, site search, or list of all available web pages.		
Headings and Labels	2.4.6	Page headings and labels for form and interactive controls are informative. Avoid duplicating headings (e.g., "More Details") or labeling text (e.g., "First Name") unless the structure provides adequate differentiation between them.		

Guidelines	WCAG Ref #(s)	Failure Conditions	Results	Failure Details (provide screen/location)
Focus Visible	2.4.7	It is visually apparent which page element has the current keyboard focus (i.e., as you tab through the page, you can see where you are).		
3.1— Readable **Language of Page**	3.1.1	The language of the page is identified using the HTML lang attribute (e.g., <html lang="en">).		
Language of Parts	3.1.2	The language of page content that is in a different language is identified using the lang attribute (e.g., <blockquote lang="es">).		
3.2—Predictable **On Focus**	3.2.1	When a page element receives focus, it does not result in a substantial change to the page, the spawning of a pop-up window, an additional change of keyboard focus, or any other change that could confuse or disorient the user.		
On Input	3.2.2	When a user inputs information or interacts with a control, it does not result in a substantial change to the page, the spawning of a pop-up window, an additional change of keyboard focus, or any other change that could confuse or disorient the user unless the user is informed of the change ahead of time.		
Consistent Navigation (does not apply to software)	3.2.3	Navigation links that are repeated on web pages do not change order when navigating through the site.		
Consistent Identification (does not apply to software)	3.2.4	Elements that have the same functionality across multiple web pages are consistently identified. For example, a search box at the top of the site should always be labeled the same way.		

Guidelines	WCAG Ref #(s)	Failure Conditions	Results	Failure Details (provide screen/location)
3.3—Input Assistance **Error Identification**	3.3.1	Required form elements or form elements that require a specific format, value, or length provide this information as a text description.		
	3.3.1	If utilized, form validation errors are presented in an efficient, intuitive, and accessible manner. The error is clearly identified, quick access to the problematic element is provided, and the user is allowed to easily fix the error and resubmit the form.		
Labels or Instructions	3.3.2	Sufficient labels, cues, and instructions for required interactive elements are provided at the beginning of the form or set of fields through instructions, examples, properly positioned form labels, and/or fieldsets/legends. (Note: Placeholder text should not be used alone to convey labels or instructions.)		
Error Suggestion	3.3.3	If an input error is detected (via client-side or server-side validation), provide suggestions for fixing the input in a timely and accessible manner.		
Error Prevention (Legal, Financial, or Data)	3.3.4.	If the user can change or delete legal, financial, or test data, the changes/deletions can be reversed, verified, or confirmed.		
4.1—Compatible **Parsing**	4.1.1.A	Significant HTML/XHTML validation/parsing errors should be avoided. Check at http://validator.w3.org/.		

Guidelines	WCAG Ref #(s)	Failure Conditions	Results	Failure Details (provide screen/location)
Name, Role, or Value	4.1.2	For tree and outline components, custom controls, page tabs, progress bars, form controls, elements with submenus, and so on, ensure the name and role can be programmatically determined; states, properties, and values that can be set by the user can be programmatically set; and notification of changes to these items is available to user agents, including assistive technologies.		
Software Interoperability With Assistive Technology	S02	Users have control over platform accessibility features.		
	502	There is no interruption between the application and platform accessibility features.		
	S02	The content of text objects and text attributes is rendered to the screen and programmatically determinable. Text objects also are modifiable with the use of assistive technology.		
Applications	503	If the application allows the user to customize the font size, color, type, or contrast, the content in the application remains available and respects the settings.		
	503	If the application offers an alternative interface, the alternative meets all other respective standards.		
	503	If the application contains multimedia, caption controls are provided at the same menu level as volume controls.		

Guidelines	WCAG Ref #(s)	Failure Conditions	Results	Failure Details (provide screen/location)
	503	If the application contains multimedia, audio description controls are provided at the same menu level as volume controls.		
Authoring Tools	504	Where an application is an authoring tool, it provides the necessary functions to create or edit accessible content in the final format.		
	504	Where an application is an authoring tool, when content is converted to another format any supported accessibility information is carried to the final format.		
	504	Where an application is an authoring tool and a PDF of content can be created, the generated PDF complies with PDF/Universal Accessibility (UA) standards.		
	504	Where an application is an authoring tool, prompts are provided to ensure that accessible content is created.		
	504	Where an application is an authoring tool, any available templates within it meet accessibility criteria.		

Time-Based Media

Guidelines	WCAG Ref #(s)	Failure Conditions	Results	Failure Details (Provide Screen/Location)
<u>**1.2—Time-Based Media**</u> **Nontext Content; Audio Only and Video Only (Prerecorded)**	1.1.1, 1.2.1	A descriptive text transcript (including all relevant visual and auditory clues and indicators) is provided for nonlive audio-only media (e.g., audio podcasts, MP3 files).		
	1.1.1, 1.2.1	A text transcript or audio description is provided for nonlive video-only content (e.g., video that has no audio track).		
Nontext Content; Captions (Prerecorded)	1.1.1, 1.2.2	Synchronized captions are provided for nonlive audio (e.g., YouTube videos).		
Nontext Content; Audio Description or Media Alternative (Prerecorded)	1.1.1, 1.2.3	A descriptive text transcript OR audio description audio track is provided for nonlive video.		
Nontext Content; Captions (Live)	1.1.1, 1.2.4	Synchronized captions are provided for all live multimedia that contain audio (e.g., audio-only broadcasts, webcasts, video conferences, animations).		
Nontext Content; Audio Description (Prerecorded)	1.1.1, 1.2.5	Audio descriptions are provided for all video content. Note: This is only required if the video conveys content visually that is not available in the default audio track.		

Appendix K. Transitioning Technical Assistance and Trainers Form/Checklist

This form is intended to provide the LINCS team with an understanding of all the intricacies of the technical assistance (TA) and training provided by your project to ensure a seamless continuation of the offerings to the field as the TA transitions to LINCS.

Project Name	Expected Transition Timing/Date
Current method for delivering TA:	
Current time commitment for delivering TA:	
Number of trainers required:	
How much were trainers paid?	
How was TA advertised to the field? How did recruitment occur?	
How was information disseminated to participants?	

Project Name	Expected Transition Timing/Date
Which trainers were most successful?	
Will the training need to be modified for the LINCS Technical Assistance Center (TAC) to provide it?	It ☐ will ☐ will not need to be modified. If it needs to be modified, please describe your recommendations to ensure success:
How can the LINCS TAC team access the training materials?	

The project team has provided…	Completed	Notes
information about how much our project's trainers were paid; differentiated by role, if applicable; and at what intervals (per event, quarterly, and so on).		
the recruitment flyers, emails, and letters used from our last two training cohorts.		
information about how participants were communicated with and what information we shared with them. This includes providing access to standard email templates that were used throughout the project.		
a prioritized list of trainers (the order in which we would hire them) and their resumes.		
the project's training materials. These are provided as Word and PowerPoint documents, as applicable (rather than PDFs).		
a description of the training for the LINCS training catalog.		

Appendix L. LINCS Training Evaluation

These are the questions in the evaluation form used for all technical assistance (TA) offered through LINCS and LINCS courses. An asterisk indicates a required question.

1) What type of training/professional development did you attend? (Select from the dropdown menu.)
If you are not sure, please select "I don't know."*

- Blended: a training/professional development consisting of online and in-person components
- Face-to-face: a training/professional development delivered in person to a live audience or group
- Virtual facilitated: an online training/professional development delivered in one or more sessions by a facilitator
- Virtual self-paced: an online/professional development training where participants move through the module at their own pace and there is no facilitator
- Webinar: a live presentation delivered online
- I don't know

2) What is the title of the training/professional development you attended?*

3) If you selected "Other," please specify the title of the training/professional development you attended.

4) On what date did you complete your training/professional development? (Use the calendar icon to select the date.)*

5) What is the full name of the primary presenter for your training/professional development? (Enter N/A if this question does not apply to your training.)*

6) What is the full name of the secondary presenter for your training/professional development? (Enter N/A or leave blank if this question does not apply to your training.)

Background

7) What is your current professional role? (Select one.)

- Teacher
- Local Program Staff
- Professional Development/Trainer
- State Director
- State Staff (e.g., data/fiscal/administrative/program)
- Researcher
- Contractor
- Other—Write in:

8) What is your home zip code?

Participant Experience

9) QUALITY OF MATERIALS AND DELIVERY

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Select ONE in each row.)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The format was an effective method for delivering this content.				
The training/professional development materials and resources were relevant to the topic.				

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The training/professional development content covered the stated learning objectives in the time allotted.	◯	◯	◯	◯

10) PRESENTER EXPERTISE

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Select ONE in each row.)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The presenter was very knowledgeable about the topic.	◯	◯	◯	◯
The presenter provided opportunities to ask questions and gave quality responses.	◯	◯	◯	◯

Participant Experience

11) RELEVANCE

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Select ONE in each row.)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The training/professional development content was relevant to my practice.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel more prepared to incorporate what I have learned into my practice.	◯	◯	◯	◯

12) OVERALL SATISFACTION

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Select ONE in each row.)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I know more about this topic than I did before.	○	○	○	○
I would recommend this training/professional development to a colleague.	○	○	○	○
Based on my experience in this training/professional development, I plan to enroll in another OCTAE or LINCS training/professional development in the future.	○	○	○	○

13) What suggestions do you have for improving this training/professional development?

Appendix M. Checklist for Adding Resources to the Resource Collection

Task (check when done)	Due Date
☐ Schedule a meeting with the LINCS Technical Assistance Center (TAC) team to review the final list of resources developed through the Federal Initiative.	
☐ Review the Resource Collection Profile Form for submitting resources and identify any questions you want to ask the LINCS TAC team.	
☐ Finalize the list of resources that will be added to the LINCS Resource Collection.	
☐ Complete the Resource Collection Profile Form for each resource that you will add to the Resource Collection.	
☐ Submit the Resource Collection Profile Form(s) to your contracting officer's representative (COR) for review and approval.	
☐ Submit the completed Resource Collection Profile Form(s) to the LINCS TAC COR.	

Appendix N. Frequently Asked Questions

General LINCS Questions

What do I do if I have read the Federal Initiatives Toolkit (FIT) and still have questions?

Start with Table 1. The LINCS Team in the Starting Your Project section. These contacts will be able to answer your questions or direct you to the appropriate team member.

Where do I go to access the LINCS Wizard or Help Desk?

LINCS Help Desk	LINCS Wizard
https://community.lincs.ed.gov/contact/contact_us	https://community.lincs.ed.gov/contact/wizard
Open to all	Must be logged in; usually for projects that need access to the LINCS system
Used primarily for: • Forgotten passwords • Blocked accounts • Verification issues • Email changes • Adding resources/publications • Broken links • Minor content changes • Requesting landing pages for special initiatives/events	Used primarily for: • New group creation • New course creation • Copying existing course • System access request • Requesting Program User Security Training • Adding a Federal Initiatives page • Uploading a PDF • Major content changes

LINCS Federal Initiatives Page

1. **When should the project begin developing its Federal Initiatives page?**

   The project page, linked to the Federal Initiatives landing page on LINCS, should be published within 90 days of the project start date, so it is important to consider this component from the earliest planning stages. This should follow the Federal Initiative Page Template (Appendix C) and, at a minimum, have the overview sections completed. For pilot and active projects, you will be able to include elements, such as recruitment messaging, update bulletins, and so on, so an early presence can work to your advantage from the start. The page will become more robust over time as new resources are developed and added to the page.

2. **What do other Federal Initiative pages look like?**

   Existing project pages can be accessed via the Federal Initiatives Adult Education landing page on LINCS: https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives.

   The following pages offer examples from some active projects:

   - Digital Resilience in the American Workforce (DRAW):https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/draw
   - Teaching Skills That Matter in Adult Education (TSTM): https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/teaching-skills-matter-adult-education

3. **Is there a specific design template that our project's page needs to follow?**

   Yes, please refer to Appendix C for the Federal Initiative Page Template. Following this template will help to ensure that the most commonly sought information on your project will be readily available to page visitors. The organization of your page (and linked subpages) is flexible and should be designed in collaboration with your project's content team, web development team member, and contracting officer's representative (COR). Please use the styles and formats that are in the rich text editor in the Drupal interface. In order to maintain a high level of security and a consistent experience for users, please refrain from using the following in your content:

   - JavaScript
   - CSS
   - iframes

   Please also keep in mind that the content must be 508 compliant and accessible for all users. Please refer to the 508 Compliance section and table for help. Also, use accessibility best practices when creating content and testing tools during development.

4. **Can we connect to other resources available on LINCS?**

   Yes! You are encouraged to consider resources available across all LINCS components in the early stages of identifying and drafting your page content. Explore the following as you begin:

   - LINCS Community groups
   - LINCS Learner Center
   - LINCS Learning Portal (courses)
   - LINCS Resource Collection
   - LINCS State Resources (including technical assistance and professional development opportunities)

LINCS Resource Collection

What kinds of resources are included in the Resource Collection?

Resources in the Resource Collection fall into one of four categories: informational materials, instructional materials, professional development, and research. Within each of those categories, there are several product types, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Types of Resources in the Resource Collection

Informational Materials	Instructional Materials	Professional Development	Research
Annotated bibliography	Course outline	Descriptions of practice	Descriptive research
Article	Curriculum	Professional learning materials	Quasi-experimental research
Informational video	Instructional video		Randomized controlled trial
Journal issue	Interactive tutorial		
Policy brief	Lesson plan		
Programmatic material	Online course		
Toolkit	Teaching strategy		
Website			
Website evaluation tool			

What topics are included in the Resource Collection?

The Resource Collection currently includes resources that fall into 13 topic areas as follows:

- Career Pathways and Postsecondary Transitions
- Civics Education and Citizenship
- Correctional and Reentry Education
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- English Language Acquisition
- Integrating Technology
- Learners With Disabilities
- Math and Numeracy
- Professional Development
- Program Management
- Reading and Writing
- Science
- Teaching and Learning

How are resources vetted for the Resource Collection?

All resources in the Resource Collection undergo a vigorous review process to ensure that the research, materials, and products included in the collection are of the highest quality. The process itself depends on the source of the resource.

Resources developed through Federal Initiatives are reviewed and approved by their COR. Resources recommended for inclusion that were not developed through a Federal Initiative go through the following process:

1. Internally, LINCS Resource Collection staff begin by determining if the resource to be reviewed is appropriate for adult learners or program staff providing adult basic education services, is available online at no cost, and includes materials that appear to be based on research that is applicable to practice.
2. An external review is initiated only if a resource meets the basic criteria. The resource is then sent to two of the topic's approved expert reviewers. These individuals review the resource, attending to the research and/or theory on which the resource is based. When a resource appears relevant to different collection topics, it is sent to reviewers with expertise in each topic. If the reviewers disagree, a third expert is asked to review the resource. LINCS staff use these reviews and comments to determine the addition of a resource to the LINCS Resource Collection.
3. Resources approved by the U.S. Department of Education or recommended by the expert reviewers are then placed in the collection. A profile for each resource provides practitioners with information about the resource, including reviewer comments and, in some cases, caution in using the materials or products effectively, or in considering application of the research findings.

LINCS Universal Technical Assistance (TA) Webinars

1. **What is the purpose of the Universal TA webinars?**

   The Universal TA webinars are part of LINCS's three-tiered approach to providing TA to build states' capacity in topics that are of importance to the field.

2. **Who is the audience of the Universal TA webinars?**

   The primary audience is state directors and state staff.

3. **How can my Federal Initiative leverage the Universal TA webinars?**

   The Universal TA webinars provide an opportunity to disseminate the resources and findings that come out of Federal Initiatives. They also can be used to recruit participants for the TA provided through Federal Initiatives.

LINCS Trainers

1. **Who are LINCS trainers?**

   LINCS trainers are subject-matter experts who provide virtual and in-person training upon request. Both the topics of the training sessions and the trainers themselves have been approved by OCTAE. As Federal Initiatives transition to LINCS, the project's trainers are eligible to join the LINCS cadre of trainers based on OCTAE's recommendation and upon completion of a brief orientation to LINCS.

2. **How are LINCS trainers hired?**

   When the LINCS Technical Assistance Center (TAC) team receives a request for TA, a trainer(s) with the appropriate expertise is identified and contacted to determine the trainer's interest and availability. We contract with them directly.

LINCS Community

1. **How do I share about my Federal Initiative with the LINCS Community members?**

   You can share information about your Federal Initiative in any of the following ways. Please see the LINCS Community section for details.

   Communitywide Announcement. A sitewide message posted by LINCS TAC staff and shared with members across the community.

   Groups. Self-posted content to one of the 13 topical groups where information is shared with group members only.

   Moderated Events. Each community group has monthly events organized and moderated by the group moderator and open to all members of the group. This must be coordinated with the group moderator. Events include both webinars and asynchronous discussions.

2. **How do I join the LINCS Community and a specific group?**

   You must sign up for a free account to participate in the LINCS Community. Complete this form to create a new account. Once you have an account, log into LINCS with your credentials, select one of the Community groups, and click on "Join Group" on the left menu. You can join as many of the 13 groups as you are interested in.

3. **How do I know what is going on in a group or learn about new content/posts?**

   Make sure you are signed up for a group subscription to be notified about new content. You can do this in the following two ways:

   a. Log into LINCS with your account credentials and navigate to the group home page. On the left menu, locate the Group Subscription section, select "Daily" or "Immediate" from the "Subscription Type" dropdown menu, and click the blue "Update" button to confirm.

b. Log into LINCS with your account credentials. Click on your profile name in the upper right and select “My Subscriptions” from the dropdown menu. Under Master Switch and Site-Wide Announcements, select the “Enabled” radio buttons to ensure that you receive email notifications. Scroll down to Group Subscriptions and select the “Immediate” or “Daily” option for the groups that you belong to. Scroll to the bottom and select the “Save Configuration” button. You should now receive email notifications whenever there is new group content.

4. **Where can I find the LINCS Code of Conduct?**

   All Community members are required to follow the LINCS Community Code of Conduct with regards to posting or sharing content in any of the Community groups. Please reach out to a group moderator or LINCS support should you have any questions about whether the content being posted is allowed.

5. **My login does not work. How do I access my account?**

   If you have not logged in in more than a year or have forgotten your password, you will need to reset your password. Select “Log In” at the top of the LINCS Community page. Click on the “Reset Your Password” tab at the top of the page. Enter your email address, complete the CAPTCHA, and click “Submit.” You will receive an email with a link that will allow you to reset your password. For detailed instructions, click here.

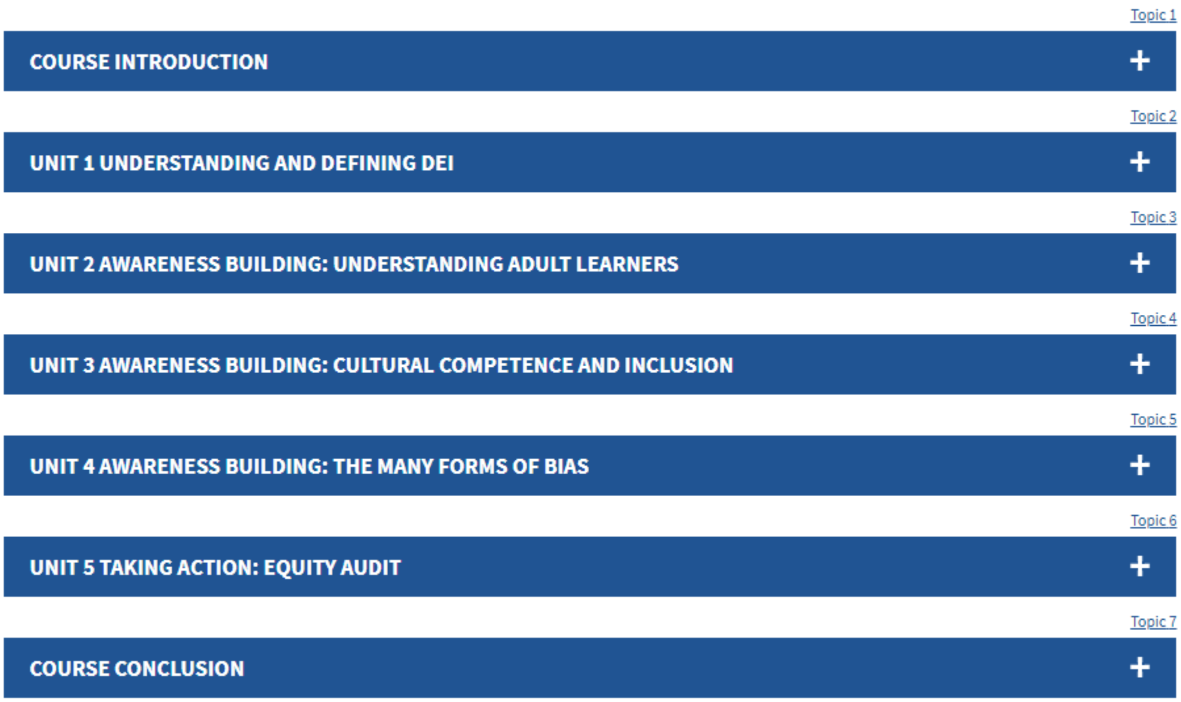
LINCS Learning Portal/Courses

1. **Moodle is new to me. Where can I access more information about this learning management system?**

   https://docs.moodle.org
   https://moodleuserguides.org/

2. **How are courses structured?**

   Courses should be in a unit format. LINCS has moved away from the term “modules” in favor of “units.” Units should be contained in Moodle topic sections, as seen in the screenshot below.



3. **Should I use Shareable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) packages in my course if I am using an external product such as Storyline or Rise?**

No, please export as an HTML file.

4. **How can I upload content for my course if I am using an external product, such as Storyline or Rise?**

Please add them to a “File” activity. Upload the content to that activity as HTML zip files, unzip, and set the “index.html” file as the main file if using Rise or set the “story.html” file as the main file if using Storyline.

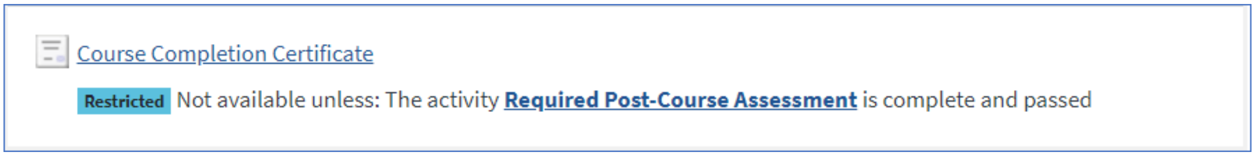
5. **Do I need to include links to open content in a new window?**

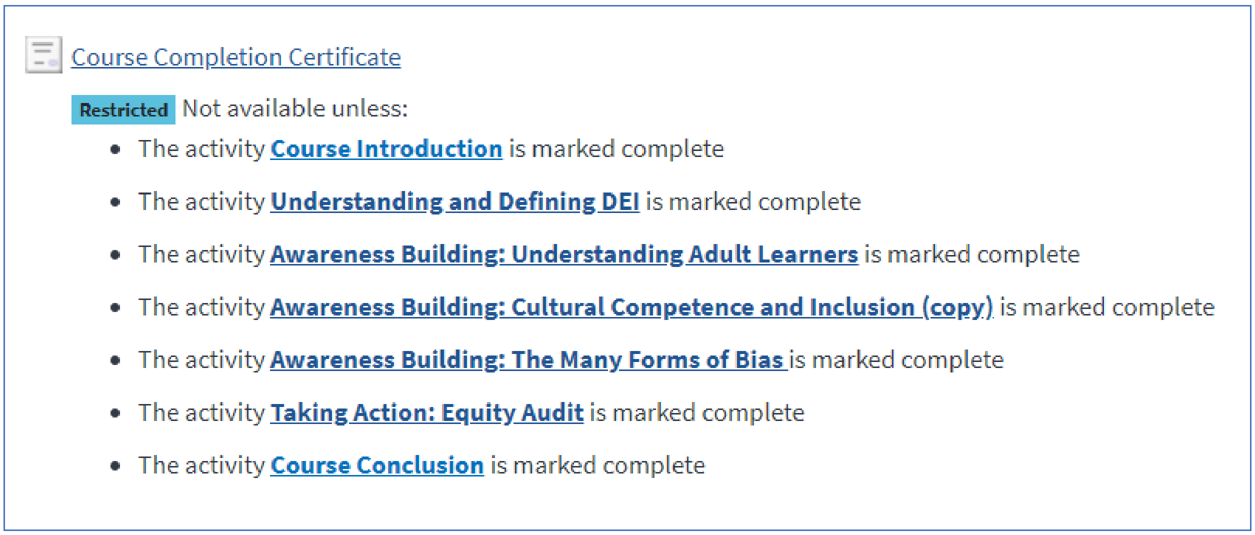
Yes. Because users may be viewing items on small screens, the content may not be optimally viewed within Moodle. Always include an “open in new window” link. Opening links in a new window also improves the user experience.

6. **Does my course need to include a certificate, and how do I set up activity completion to work with my certificate?**

Yes, your course should include a certificate unless it is only informational and there are no assessments included. Adult educators may use certificates for professional development credit in state/local programs that accept LINCS courses as an option for professional development.

Certificates are set to require completion of specific activities. For example, the *Teaching Adult English Learners: Principles and Practices* certificate is linked to completion of the postcourse assessment (screenshot below), while the *Diversity Equity, and Inclusion* (DEI) course certificate is linked to having completed all Rise units. Please note that Moodle will set all completions to “Students can manually mark the activity as completed” by default, so please manually change the settings if the student must do something to earn completion (i.e., view, reach the end of a lesson, receive a passing grade).

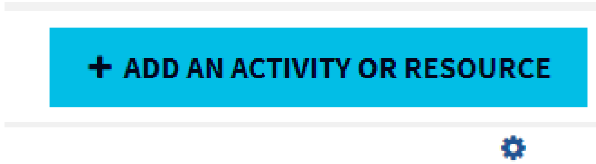




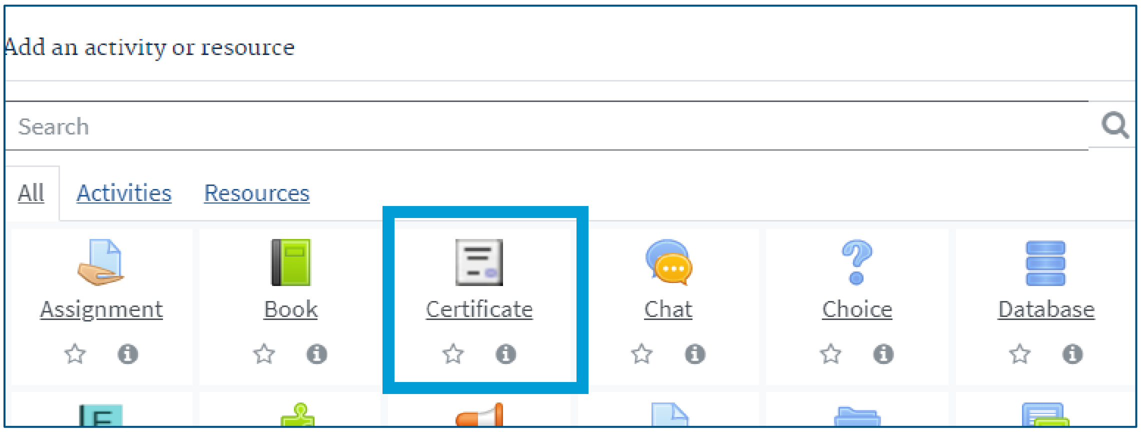
Course developers should use automated options to update activity completion; this will require revising the activity completion settings because, by default, Moodle will assign a self-check box to all activities unless manually changed. Automated options to mark activities as complete are based on viewing an activity or receiving a grade, with the exception of facilitated courses, which also can include discussion of post requirements and assignment submissions. Course developers should avoid self-check boxes and remove unnecessary completion boxes if the items are not required for completion (i.e., optional resources, certificates, labels, and so on should not include a completion box). Following is a link to a quick tutorial on these options and how to assign grades (a quiz is used as an example because it is the most complicated) and completion requirements: https://moodle.com/news/track-learners-progress-using-activity-completion-moodle/.

7. How do I issue a certificate?

a. Ensure that you have turned editing on, and select "ADD AN ACTIVITY OR RESOURCE."



b. Add the certificate activity.



c. The certificate name should be "Course Completion Certificate."

d. Add an introduction, such as "Congratulations! You've completed [*Name of Course*]. Please download your course certificate."

e. Under the "Print Credit Hours" field found in the "Text Options" section, be sure to enter the number of hours for the course as the number of hours will be displayed on the certificate.

f. Ensure that the certificate type (found in the "Design Options" section of the activity setting) is set to "LINCS" and the signature image is "deal-signature."

g. In the "Restrict Access" section, add any items that are required to earn a certificate.

h. Click "Save and Display."

8. Do I need to add captions to videos included in my course?

All videos used in LINCS courses must be captioned and have a transcript provided with the video embedded or a link to comply with 508 requirements.

9. What do I do if I am using a third-party video and it does not include captioning?

Add the following disclaimer to your course and link a video transcript near the video so that LINCS users can have access to the text:

The course may contain resources by a third party outside of the Department of Education. As such, the Department is not responsible for its content, nor can it guarantee it is accessible in *accordance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you need access to an accessible version, please reach out to the third-party vendor for assistance.*

Announcements and Social Media

What are effective topics for social media posts?

Great topics for social media posts include synchronous events, asynchronous discussions, newly released resources, and resources that connect to holidays or days of appreciation.

How can I make my post engaging?

Many of the best social media posts have four things in common. First, they are brief. Although Twitter encourages a sense of brevity with a 280-character limit, some of the most effective tweets contain fewer than half that amount, registering between 71 and 100 characters. Second, be sure to have a clear call to action, such as registering for an event, submitting a resource or discussion post, or answering a question. Third, it is great to use visuals when possible. Please note: It is vital that the image chosen obeys all copyright laws. Accordingly, sites such as Unsplash, Pixabay, and Pexels can be helpful as they feature royalty-free stock images. Other great resources for social media photos include Images of Empowerment, AllGo, Smithsonian Institution on Flickr, Library of Congress, and Creative Commons. Be sure to take note of all licensing information and share it with the proposed visual. Finally, reach your audience by using appropriate hashtags. Twitter Explore is a great tool for finding trending hashtags. Please note, however, that two to three hashtags is most effective.

How do I compose alt text if I share an image in a social media post?

Alt text is an important and necessary resource for describing photos. When writing alt text for your photo or graphic, be sure to explain what is visible and if any text is presented. Be sure to use complete sentences as much as possible. For both Twitter and LinkedIn, the alt text limit is 1,000 characters.

About the American Institutes for Research

Established in 1946, with headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit institution that conducts behavioral and social science research and delivers technical assistance to solve some of the most urgent challenges in the U.S. and around the world. We advance evidence in the areas of education, health, the workforce, human services, and international development to create a better, more equitable world. For more information, visit AIR.ORG.

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