


M E M O R A N D U M

October 20, 2021

TO: Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee
Education and Culture (E&C) Committee

FROM: Carolyn Chen, Legislative Analyst 

SUBJECT: **Briefing/Discussion:** Overview of County grant-funded programs to support workforce development through English literacy

PURPOSE: Landscape Scan of Workforce Development Programs to supplement discussion on [Talent Pipelines in the County: Career Pathways Post COVID-19](#)

Expected Participants:

- Kathy Stevens, Executive Director, Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy (MCAEL)
- Deborah Lambert, Senior Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

Background

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Council's FY22 budget review process included a consent calendar approval of several department/office budgets with the plan that those departments/offices would be scheduled for a Committee oversight review session in the Fall of 2021. The purpose of these oversight sessions is to provide the Committees with an opportunity to meet with Department/Office Directors; receive updates on key programs or initiatives; and review any relevant spending or performance data.

The [Education and Culture Committee met on April 26, 2021](#) to review the County Executive's FY22 Recommended Budget request for a program enhancement of \$100,000 for the Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy (MCAEL). The Committee recommended an increase to MCAEL's Non-Department Account and although MCAEL was not a consent calendar item in the budget review process, be included in a Fall oversight session with [WorkSource Montgomery](#) to strategically align funding and outcomes for the County's workforce development efforts.

Following a PHED / EC joint committee discussion on [March 15, 2021 on Employment and Continued Education Opportunities for Career Pathway Students During and After the COVID-19 Health Pandemic](#), the joint committee scheduled a second discussion on [Talent Pipelines in the County: Career Pathways Post COVID-19](#).

This briefing aims to provide a general overview of adult English literacy programs supported by MCAEL to supplement the joint committee discussion on post-pandemic workforce strategy.

This packet contains:

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Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy (MCAEL) Alignment with Workforce Development for Adult Learners [October 19, 2021 Memo]..... ©1-11

MCAEL FY22 Approved Operating Budget.....[Online](#)



To: Carolyn Chen
From: Kathy Stevens, Executive Director, MCAEL
Date: October 19, 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to provide some information about the work that the MCAEL coalition does that aligns ESOL classes with workforce development for adult learners.

One of the challenges over the years (prior to the establishment of WorkSource Montgomery) was the fact that Montgomery County did not have a listing of workforce development programs. MCAEL coalition members created a list in or around 2013/2014 which also provided the level of English needed to best utilize those programs. We are happy to now work with WorkSource as they are creating new tools and databases for community use.

As the conversations continue about supporting and building a workforce development system in the county, it is imperative to recognize the crucial role that programs such as those in the MCAEL network play in workforce development that support their clients. Not only do they provide these services, but they are the front line workers who know what their clients need. A workforce system in Montgomery County necessarily connects all workforce development opportunities – from community-based programs and organically developed opportunities to formal programs such as a Mi-Best type program other credentialing programs at Montgomery College which incorporate English and workforce skill development together.

I have provided a few examples of how ESOL and workforce development are interrelated in the ESOL classes (MCAEL collects qualitative data such as these success stories twice per year from grant partners). Many of our programs provide specific job preparation training as well as job coaches, etc. These stories are from our most recent funding year. (please note that some of these stories are written by program staff for whom English is not their first language.)

CASA Workforce ESOL Programs

To ensure that day laborers and our LEP community members at large have access to critical ESOL instruction for workplace application during the pandemic, this fall CASA hosted additional classes via Facebook Live on a variety of themes pulled from the Workforce ESOL curriculum. Thirty-minute lessons were held on a monthly basis and covered the following topics: employer introductions, wage negotiation, workplace safety, and tenants' rights. The lessons proved to be very popular with an average of 1,700 views per lesson and a total of 8,566 views overall as of 12/18/20. As the pandemic continues, we

plan to host additional Facebook Live lessons into the winter and potentially into the spring as well.

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington

Bernard enrolled in the ESOL program after completing Catholic Charities' Food Services training. Due to the shortage of employment opportunities in the restaurant industry during the current public health crisis, Bernard decided to explore other career options. After enrolling in our advanced level ESOL course to improve his English skills, Bernard asked Catholic Charities for assistance in finding other employment possibilities. He also requested guidance on how to complete the GED so he could enroll in more advanced training courses. The ESOL instructor worked closely with Bernard to explore different partner programs and he was able to successfully enroll for classes at Montgomery College.

Identity, Inc.

"Ana" is from El Salvador and arrived in the U.S. five years ago. Ana enrolled in our center in October 2020 and, from the beginning, demonstrated determination and eagerness to learn, expressing in her intake that "she wants to learn as much as she possibly can" from our organization. Ana has shown commitment to work towards reaching her goals of attending college, opening her own electrical repair service company, and mastering the English language. In order to do so, Ana has been very engaged and is one of the most consistent students, frequently participating and asking questions. Ana has also received case management with emergency food assistance as well as workforce development services from our organization. As a result of more comfort and knowledge of the English language, Ana felt ready to explore and apply to electrical technician programs. With the help of our job coaches, Ana received a scholarship from Montgomery College to study to become an electrician. Ana is the first in her family to attend college and looks forward to taking more classes in the future. Ana has also attended several entrepreneurship workshops with Montgomery College and Identity in hopes of one day opening up her own electrical repair service company.

Vietnamese American Services (English for Specific Needs)

VAS realized that many community members are struggling with reducing income due to the pandemic. Their restaurants closed or only take to-go orders so they do not hire as many waiters or cooks as before. Same as nail workers, the nail salons have to limit their capacity and not many clients who want to do nails like before, so their income are reduced significantly.

Considering the circumstance, VAS launched a new project to help people apply jobs. When people need help to get jobs, we have informal assessments to match the capacities and

needs of the candidates to the available jobs. So far, we have connecting candidates to jobs with corporations and small jobs too and 25 people got jobs successfully since September 1st.

1- Amazon warehouses hire workers all the time. But candidates have to apply online and have to do the tests online. Candidates need to have English as high beginners. VAS helped clients to fill the application, do the tests online, set up appointments for interviews, health checks. 6 people got jobs with Amazon.

2- We have a MOU with Diezt and Watson (a company make ham, cheeses, sausages, have a factory in Baltimore) to recruit workers for them continuously. We do outreach and recruit people for them 4-6 people per month. We do interviews and hire workers at VAS office, instruct candidates to get health check and our staff will be at the factory to interpret on the orientation day. 15 people have started working in the factory since September. They don't need to know a word in English and if they have no transportation, we pair them with people with cars and English, so they can support each other. The company is very happy with our services, so they donate their foods to our seniors every week.

We also connected people with small jobs like home care services to take care for Vietnamese seniors, babysitting and fixing houses in the community. Regarding to fixing houses in the community, we invited teachers who are experienced and trained with construction, plumbing, electrician to train other community members who are handy and want to do the jobs but need learning more the vocabulary, the basic knowledge so they can read instructions or have deeper understanding of the handy jobs.

In our workforce development class, learners are provided educational materials on plumbing and construction courses for beginners. They are given homework, demonstrations, quizzes, and exams throughout the semester. Our workforce development instructor grade them based on attendance and skill demonstrations. If a learner failed to attend 20% of class time, they will automatically be dropped from the course and will have to re-register if they wanted to come back.

If graduated from the course, learners will be awarded with a certificate, which will allow them to practice or accept basic plumbing and/or construction jobs working under the instructor's license.

Please feel free to contact MCAEL for further information and discussion. Attached to this memorandum is a list of MCAEL's current grant supported programs. In addition, there are another 20-30 programs in the county that teach English to adults. MCAEL provides training, resources, technical assistance to those programs, as well, supporting and building a system of ESOL to meet adult learners' needs. One of the primary needs the



learners articulate in their goals are increasing their English skills to support their education goals and finding jobs.



2022 Grant Awards

The goal of the MCAEL grants program is to increase the availability of adult ESOL and literacy services that support identified community needs and diverse populations while also supporting improvement of the quality of services. MCAEL is pleased to partner once again with the Montgomery County Government to offer grant support in FY22 for programs during the period July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022. MCAEL's FY22 priorities are to support the expansion of services in areas where adult ESOL learning opportunities are scarce, including Upcounty and East County, and for populations that lack access, as well as weekend classes. These priorities are identified through an annual analysis of data collected from providers. MCAEL also supports provision of childcare and transportation to address these barriers to attending class.

Grant Partners

Ana A. Brito Foundation, Inc.
 Association of Vietnamese Americans
 Bender JCC of Greater Washington
 Briggs Center for Faith and Action
 CASA
 Catholic Charities
 Chinese Cultural and Community Service Center
 Community Reach of Montgomery County
 Covenant Life Church
 Ethiopian Community Center
 Family Services, Inc./Sheppard Pratt

George B. Thomas, Sr. Learning Academy
 Identity, Inc.
 IMPACT Silver Spring
 Literacy Council of Montgomery County
 Mill Creek Parish United Methodist Church
 Rockville Seniors, Inc.
 Seneca Creek Community Church
 Vietnamese American Services
 Washington New Covenant Fellowship Church

FY 22

TOTAL REQUESTED FUNDING

21 organizations, 29 programs and a total of \$1,451,455 in requests

TOTAL AWARDS

- \$1,277,000 in grant funding
- Grants awarded to support 20 organizations for 28 programs
- 9 Program Grants and 19 Access Grants

Legend



Transportation



Childcare

For a description of grant types please see: <http://mcael.org/grants>

See our full directory at: <http://mcael.org/directory>

Program Grants

CASA

Life Skills ESOL Program

\$170,826

To support ESOL programming focused on improving low-income immigrants' ability to understand, speak, and write in English through morning, evening, and Saturday classes. These skills are critical to immigrants' ability to participate and integrate fully in civic life.

www.wearecasa.org



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Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington

English for Speakers of Other Languages Program

\$108,000

Catholic Charities' ESOL Program works to increase the English Literacy skills of low-income, limited English proficient members of Montgomery County's Hispanic and immigrant communities. This program operates out of the Spanish Catholic Center in Gaithersburg.

www.catholiccharitiesdc.org



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Community Reach of Montgomery County Inc.

Language Outreach Program

\$128,838

To support the Language Outreach Program, a family-based ESOL and literacy program for non-English speaking adult Montgomery County Residents that offers free childcare, preschool enrichment, and tutoring for childcare while their parents are in class. The goal of the program is to help immigrants obtain the level of English needed to succeed in the community and improve their quality of life.

www.cmrocks.org



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Ana A. Brito Foundation, Inc.

English Literacy Program at Epworth United Methodist Church of Gaithersburg

\$36,440

For the AABFI Adult English Literacy Program, which provides and facilitates English learning opportunities to financially vulnerable persons of limited English proficiency in northern Montgomery County. The program currently has six levels of classes and provides support services, including childcare, to enable more individuals to attend classes.

www.aabfi.org



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Ethiopian Community Center African Immigrant Vocational ESOL Program

\$41,000

To offer three levels of vocational English literacy classes to Montgomery County's limited English proficient (LEP) African immigrant residents who live in Takoma Park's Maple Avenue corridor and Piney Branch Road. The goal of the program is to equip African immigrants in low wage and low skill jobs with employment-related English language skills that will allow them to successfully access educational and workforce development opportunities.

www.ethiopiancommunitydc.org



www.mcael.org

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Program Grants

Family Services, Inc./ Sheppard Pratt

Family Discovery Center ESOL

\$35,000

For ESOL classes at the Family Discovery Center in Rockville for parents with young children (birth-4 years old) who live in Montgomery County. Families attending FDC also receive other free, comprehensive services (not funded by MCAEL), such as: family literacy and child development programming; parenting, employment readiness, and health education classes as well as case management and transportation assistance.



Transportation



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www.sheppardpratt.org/family-services-inc

Family Services Inc. /Sheppard Pratt

English Literacy Classes - Linkages to

Learning/Parent Resource Center

\$294,769

To enhance capacity for community engagement and leadership by providing quality services to families and building capacity through County support to meet the needs of County residents. The program provides quality Beginning ESOL Literacy, Low Beginning, and High Beginning level classes to parents/community members with limited English proficiency to increase parent/school and civic engagement, leadership development, and parents' ability to support their children's academic success.



Transportation



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www.sheppardpratt.org/family-services-inc

Literacy Council of Montgomery County

ESOL Class Program

\$201,207

The Literacy Council of Montgomery County (LCMC) equips adults with the vital academic and vocational skills they need to navigate, and thrive in their local communities. LCMC offers ESOL programs throughout the county to adult learners where English proficiency is a tool for success in achieving employment, academic, and everyday life goals.

<https://www.lcmcmd.org>

Rockville Seniors Inc.

Rockville Senior Center English Program

\$49,358

The program provides opportunities for immigrants 60 years of age or older from diverse cultural, educational, language, and socio-economic backgrounds to learn functional speaking, listening, reading and writing skills that can build confidence, promote independence, and encourage engagement in the community. The program is held in a setting that encourages social interaction, promotes diversity, and offers programs that provide additional opportunities for learning and practicing English and conversation skills.

<https://www.rockvillemd.gov/397/Services>



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Access Grants

Association of Vietnamese Americans

New Americans Advocacy Services

English Classes

\$8,800

To help Vietnamese Americans with little or limited English proficiency (LEP) learn basic English literacy skills, so that they can become more independent and also be able to take AVA's US Citizenship Test Prep class to prepare them to pass the U.S. Citizenship tests.

www.avaus.org

Bender JCC of Greater Washington

ESOL for Seniors and Workforce

\$9,000

To provide a community-based, comprehensive ESOL program for immigrant seniors, mainly of Russian-speaking background. In addition, to provide a program for foreign-born, skilled and unskilled "front-line" workers in healthcare and environmental services in the healthcare industry. Both will work in tandem to incorporate daily life skills, including reading and conversation.

www.benderjccgw.org



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Briggs Center for Faith and Action

ESOL Program

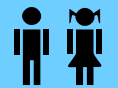
\$15,000

To improve the Limited English Proficient (LEP) learner's ability and confidence in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English. There is an emphasis on vocabulary, grammar, conversation, pronunciation and comprehension.

www.briggscenter.org



Transportation



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CASA

\$7,500 for Rockville

Workforce ESOL

\$7,500 for Silver Spring

\$7,500 for Wheaton

To support drop-in English classes for low-income LEP immigrant workers who access employment and other related services at CASA's Welcome Centers in Rockville, Silver Spring and Wheaton. The Workforce ESOL program aims to improve workers' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in English to expand their employment prospects and increase their earnings.

www.wearecasa.org

Chinese Cultural and Community Service Center

Adult English Literacy Program

\$11,000

To improve participants' English skills, to enable them to: increase their employability; become more self-reliant and confident; be better integrated into American society; and achieve their personal goals. The target population is mainly Chinese immigrants who need help with all aspects of their English.

www.ccacc-dc.org

Community Reach of Montgomery County

Language Outreach Program Conversation Club

\$ 14,884

The goals of these Conversation Sessions are to help our learners (LOP students and Interfaith Clothing Center clients, being primarily low-income, non-English-speaking immigrant residents of Montgomery County) with daily English Language skills, improve conversational listening and pronunciation, as well as to reinforce learning during semester and/or reduce learning loss between semesters for current LOP students.

www.cmrocks.org



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Access Grants

Covenant Life Church ESOL Program | \$15,000

To support a family-friendly ESOL program for a diverse Gaithersburg community of adult students. The program aims to improve participants' English proficiency in listening, reading, writing and speaking through classes, conversation, and community integration activities.

www.covlife.org



George B. Thomas, Sr. Learning Academy Adult Literacy Class | \$7,843

To support student participation in Saturday School and benefit parents whose full participation in their community is hampered by a lack of proficiency in English. Wrap around services are provided to create an environment in which parents are learning along with their children at Saturday School and are developing personal relationships that empower them and enhance their children's success, as well as their own.

www.saturdayschool.org



IMPACT Silver Spring English Language Classes | \$11,000

To support English Language Acquisition classes, which have seen a rise in demand in the local Long Branch immigrant communities. The goal is to remove the barriers to obtaining English language skills and to provide free, accessible English language acquisition to this underserved community, supporting residents' capacities to grow their social and economic assets.

www.impactsilverspring.org



Family Services, Inc. / Sheppard Pratt Thriving Germantown | \$12,993

To continue to offer an adult ESOL conversation class program as part of the Thriving Germantown (TG) Community Hub. This program will continue to focus on Captain James E. Daly Elementary School catchment area – a highly diverse, low income, and high needs area. Improved English Literacy will help parents and adult family members to actively partner in their children's education, improve their family's ability to utilize health and social services resources, and engage in workforce opportunities.

www.sheppardpratt.org/family-services-inc



Identity, Inc. English Literacy for Disconnected Young Adults \$18,000

To provide basic level ESOL classes for the Disconnected Youth Program. The program provides an English learning opportunity to disconnected youth (aged 16-25) with extremely low levels of English proficiency to support their educational, work and life goals, and to encourage continued English language learning.

www.identity-youth.org



Transportation

Mill Creek Parish United Methodist Church* ESOL Program | \$3,380

To provide adult learners opportunities to learn, study and practice English through various levels of adult ESOL classes and community events. The program started in direct response to a stated need for more English classes by parents of students in elementary and middle schools in the Derwood community surrounding our church.

www.millcreekparish.org



www.mcael.org

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Access Grants

Literacy Council of Montgomery County

LC Chats*

\$8,962

This program helps learners throughout the county to improve their English on a drop-in basis. LCMC's LC Chats Program emphasizes conversational skills with a life-skills component with a specific theme each week. This learning model offers flexibility, and it does not involve a registration process.

<https://www.lcmcmd.org>



Childcare

Seneca Creek Community Church

ESOL Program

\$15,000

To increase the number of seats and enrich the existing ESOL classes to continue to transform the lives of families in the surrounding area providing opportunities for individuals to grow and prosper socially and financially through improved English language communication skills.

www.senecacreek.org



Transportation



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Vietnamese American Services

English Classes for Daily Conversation

\$14,100

Vietnamese American Services offers drop-in English classes for the Vietnamese American community to people facing multiple barriers in Montgomery County. The program provides opportunities for this underserved population to learn directly from native speakers, mitigating the language barrier and helping them engage in their community. Classes serve learners from beginner level with a focus on daily life conversation.

Vietnamese American Services

English Classes for Specific Needs

\$14,100

This program prepares learners for tests and exams unique to their needs, including the U.S. Citizenship Test and Certification for workforce development for immigrants.

www.vasusa.org

Washington New Covenant Fellowship Church

English Classes

\$10,000

To provide English learning opportunities to the immigrant population in Germantown and strengthen English proficiency so that students can take on more active roles in the local community.

www.ncfcmd.org



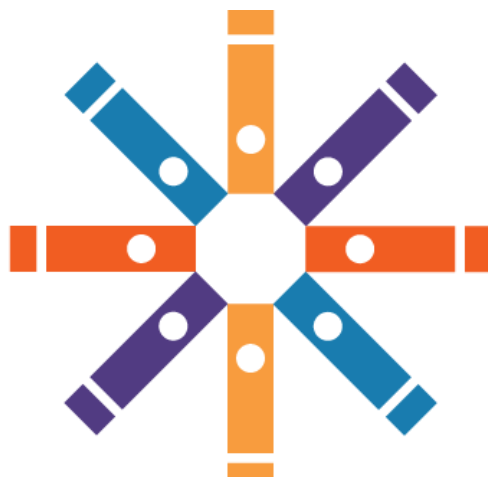
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Our Process

Funding decisions are made by a volunteer Grant Review Panel composed of community members. The panel members are selected to represent a diversity of experience and expertise in one or more of the following: the local community and community needs, nonprofit management, adult literacy and grant making.

Timeline

January/February • MCAEL grant guidelines released; Grant Information session held

Mid-March • Appointments available with MCAEL staff to answer questions about the grant application forms

Early-April • Application deadline

May/June • Grant Panel members review applications & interview applicants • Panel meets to develop funding recommendations

• MCAEL Board reviews/approves funding recommendations

June • Applicants are notified in writing of the MCAEL board's final funding decision.

FY22 Grant Review Panel

MCAEL thanks the panel of community members who donated extensive time and energy to review and analyze the grant applications.

Alex Galen
Algenis (Al) Liriano
Grace Karambiri
Hawa Farah
Joan Schaffer*
Lashon Lissimore

Marguerite Raaen
Mary Gallagher
Matthew Brown
Samantha Kupferman
Stacy Parkinson*
Stephanie Freeman

MCAEL Board Member*



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