



MCAEL

Montgomery Coalition for

Adult English Literacy

Strategic Plan
FY2010- FY2012

About MCAEL

Today in Montgomery County, an estimated one in seven residents are potentially limited in their ability to speak, read and write the English language. With the arrival of nearly half of the county's foreign born population during the past decade, demand for English language instruction is high—while resources are often scarce. Adults eager to study may face long waiting lists. Employers are confronted with a workforce that is not prepared with the language and literacy skills necessary to safely and effectively perform their duties or to meet today's workforce needs. Schools, social service organizations, and other first responders are challenged to provide access and care at a high cost. And throughout the County, those with limited English proficiency face isolation from being able to communicate within their families, from their neighbors, and from the opportunities of the community in which they live and work.

In 2003, county elected officials and members of the community convened to address concerns about how to serve the needs of a growing population; integration challenges; and the need for an English-literate workforce. A study conducted by the international research organization Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) identified that while a rich tapestry of community and faith-based organizations were providing adult ESOL programs, a significant lack of coordination, collaboration and capacity existed within the county. Many grassroots, immigrant-serving nonprofits had developed programs that were highly effective in attracting, supporting and building relationships of trust with immigrant learners. However, these programs were scattered; had limited expertise in delivering professional programs; and lacked resources to improve capacity quality. Furthermore, the demand for services was not being met, as reflected by waitlists totalling more than 2,000 individuals.

A County Council-led task force identified the need to develop a county-wide coordinating entity to expand professional and service capacity; elevate the issue of

literacy in the community; leverage resources; and encourage collaboration among the diverse organizations serving the equally diverse adult English language learner population in Montgomery County.

Established in 2005 and incorporated in 2006 as an independent non-profit organization, the Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy (MCAEL) was created to serve as this unique lead convener. MCAEL brings the community together around a common goal of strengthening the adult English literacy network, by engaging private and public sector partners, and by working to strengthen the capacity of direct service programs. MCAEL works to ensure that adults are able to access high-quality programs that meet their needs, and that employers have access to an English-literate workforce. Recognized as a unique model worthy of emulation, MCAEL provides resources, training, collaboration and advocacy at a macro-level scale, enabling a diverse, micro-level service delivery system that addresses the community and workforce needs of today—and tomorrow.

About MCAEL

In 2008, MCAEL staff and board undertook a strategic planning process, facilitated with the generous pro-bono support of Montgomery College. Informed by our provider organization partners and the community at large, this plan establishes a road map to guide MCAEL's future work.

MCAEL wishes to thank our many volunteers, donors and partners. In particular, we thank Montgomery County Government for continued support, and Montgomery College, who so generously lent us the expertise of Clarice Somersall, Kevin Long and Carmen D'Agostino.

MCAEL also wishes to thank George Washington University graduate students Timo Mahn, Ruth Speyer, and Margarita Puerto, whose evaluation and community survey work informed the development of this plan. Finally, MCAEL recognizes the outstanding legacy of Dr. Deborah Bhattacharyya, who served as MCAEL Program Manager from 2007-2009. Debbie's vision helped to inform this plan, and her memory and service to MCAEL before her death in 2009 will be remembered by all who had the honor of working with her.

MISSION

MCAEL is dedicated to strengthening the county-wide adult English literacy network with resources, training, collaborations and advocacy to support a thriving community and an optimal workforce.

VISION

We envision a culturally dynamic community where:

- * All adult residents are employable, engaged, and empowered by literacy to achieve their full potential.
- * All local businesses have access to an English literate workforce.

VALUES

- * We aspire to be effective stewards of community resources.
- * We pledge to be responsive to community literacy needs.
- * We believe that literacy empowers learners, as individuals, family members, workers and community residents.
- * We believe that literacy is key to an adept workforce, which in turn brings economic prosperity to the community.
- * We believe that people, and their creativity, talents and passion, as well as willingness to accept challenges, are key to MCAEL's success.
- * We advance professional and ethical standards, best practices, and accountability.
- * We value diversity and promote cultural competence in our work.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

To support our mission, MCAEL will pursue the following goals and objectives over the next three years.

Goal 1: Strengthen the capacity of adult English literacy service providers to deliver high quality, effective programs that meet the needs of learners.

- 1.1.** Cultivate a professional community for program staff and instructors to support improved program and instructional quality.
- 1.2.** Provide periodic notices of funding and training opportunities and best practices, among other things, to increase provider access to resources.
- 1.3.** Host regular meetings to increase coordination and collaboration among providers with the outcomes that they share information, work on common issues, and leverage resources.
- 1.4.** Improve MCAEL and provider capacity to collect and use common performance data to make decisions, ensure accountability, and improve the quality of programming.

Goal 2: Expand, leverage, and coordinate the full resources of the community to support the provision of and access to adult ESOL and literacy.

- 1.1.** Administer and support a fund that awards program grants to advance MCAEL's strategic goals.
- 1.2.** Serve as a community resource for stakeholders of adult English Literacy by acting as an information clearinghouse.
- 1.3.** Maintain a visible community presence to garner public awareness and support of MCAEL and its mission.

Goal 3: Promote adult English literacy as a key investment opportunity that is central to family, community, and economic prosperity in Montgomery County.

- 1.1.** Develop and implement a marketing plan to raise public awareness, strategically communicate with key stakeholders, identify and cultivate new champions, raise a media presence.
- 1.2.** Create a broad base of supporters for adult English literacy
- 1.3.** Monitor and share legislative and policy developments that have or will have significant or broad impact on MCAEL or its providers, and its work to represent a voice for the adult English literacy community.

Goal 4: Develop MCAEL's internal capacity—people, systems and its resources—and couple with best practices to successfully implement the strategic plan.

- 1.1.** Recruit, develop and retain a diverse, high-impact staff, board and volunteer corps.
- 1.2.** Operate MCAEL in compliance with laws and ethical norms to aspire toward the highest level of stewardship, transparency and accountability.
- 1.3.** Evaluate MCAEL as an organization, its programs and board and staff regularly to monitor progress, steward resources responsibly, and respond strategically to community needs and environmental challenges.
- 1.4.** Draft a technology plan to identify necessary technology to support organization's goals at the implementation level.
- 1.5.** Ensure sustainable and diverse resources to support MCAEL's mission and vision.

MCAEL Board and Staff 2009

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