

Adult Education Block Grant : Annual Plan : 2018-19 Produced: Oct 31, 2018, 3:43 PM UTC Action Taskman

62 South Orange County Regional Consortium (SOCRC)

Plans & Goals - Consortium Approved

Executive Summary

The South Orange County Regional Consortium (SOCRC) will continue to build on the strong momentum its members have achieved from its three year plan in 2018-2019. The members will continue to maximize the impact of their allocations in alignment with this plan and the three year plan. Our vision is to continue our outreach and programs to local communities to engage Adult Education Students across the region. Efforts are being focused on increasing the retention of AEP students and their successful completion of coursework in AESL, CTE and general education curriculum classes. We are now offering students a variety of class modalities across the region including onsite, online and hybrid platforms. Our data and accountability cohort study research indicates that the two strongest barriers to course completion for our AEP students are transportation and family obligations. Offering courses in a hybrid format at our sites directly addresses these two barriers to student success. We are also expanding our locations: at Tustin Unified School District (TUSD), faculty are offering classes at a One Stop Center at the Orange County Family Resource Center in Irvine with another SOCRC Partner, the Irvine Unified School District. The majority of our sites have added more pronunciation and conversational classes in response to student surveys. Our community college partners continue to expand our portfolio of classes for Adults with Disabilities (AWD). We are also enhancing our Career Technical Education in the areas of Pharmacy Technician, Surgical Technologist and Dental X-Ray Assistant in partnership with California Career Advantage. Our resource allocations reflect these efforts and are consistent with our three year plan. The result is that our AEP students invest a short period of time in a class and are then job ready within six months. Our Capistrano Adult Education site has worked with local doctors, hospitals and pharmacies to ensure that AEP students are placed quickly and effectively into these jobs. The Surgical Technologist and Pharmacy programs articulate with courses that begin at the high school level. We ask the full-time faculty at Irvine Valley and Saddleback Colleges to collaborate with the SOCRC so that we may dovetail with other program efforts such as Strong Workforce and Guided Pathways, supporting and not supplanting each other's resources. We continually assess our ability to address the five program areas under the program.

Regional Planning Overview

The SOCRC coordinates its planning efforts within the South Orange County regional paradigm. Specifically, it sends a representative to the Regional Work Group each month to participate in structural economic discussions and activities for the region. The representative then returns to the consortium to report out on activities within the region and ways to engage in larger regional planning. In 2018, the SOCRC co-authored the South Orange County Work Group Regional Plan by providing a matrix of its services, goals and objectives to the Regional Planning Director. Another way that the SOCRC includes regional planning is to coordinate its efforts with the Orange County Department of Education (OCDOE). Currently, the OCDOE is an active member of the SOCRC and has been since its formation. This representative is a revolving position and is active within our consortium, informing us as to new educational initiatives for adult education in the region. Efforts are also being made to involve local community groups in our planning process such as the regional Chambers of Commerce and Strong Workforce groups from Community Colleges. Several sites also have included Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding to support but not supplant the Adult Education Block Program, such as the WIOA Program at Saddleback College. The planning process is pervasive and ongoing; we discuss our planning efforts at each monthly consortium meeting. Our Cohort Study results are used as data analytics to inform all members of AEP students' needs and accomplishments. This provides real time information so that the members can make important planning decisions regarding budget and programs. Inevitably, challenges arise because of program review. We will then have working sessions whereby the consortium members tackle the issues relating to the challenges, planning new and innovative solutions. This cycle of data informing program implementation has worked very successfully for the past three years of the program.

Meeting Regional Needs

Regional Need #1

Gaps in Service / Regional Needs

Increasing Capacity for AEP Students: The data from Cohorts 1 and 2 of our Data and Accountability Study indicates that AEP students want more access to a wider variety of courses and locations. This is especially true for Career Technical Education, where students are often wait-listed for classes due to high demand. We addressed this gap by offering more class sections and responding to regional needs for more job and vocational skills preparation.

How do you know? What resources did you use to identify these gaps?

The SOCRC has built in a system of checks and balances towards its progress by using both institutional and external data to ensure effectiveness. The members have worked together to create a collaborative Mission and Vision Statement in 2018. They have set goals and objectives based on these statements. To measure progress, the SOCRC has hired Blue Tiger Inc., an independent, certified consulting firm, to conduct research on AEP and to ensure that the SOCRC and its programs are in fiscal, programmatic and administrative compliance. All expenditures made by SOCRC members are presented to the consortium and its compliance officer for review and approval under AEP and Education Code guidelines. When a large expense such as a capital outlay project is being sought by one of the members, the SOCRC must review and approve the expense to ensure that it is tied to one of the five AEP Program Area Objectives and allowable. The expense must directly respond to one of the regional gaps identified in both our annual plan, three year plan and strategic plan. Service gaps have been identified through the research process of over 1000 completed AEP Student Surveys and over 500 in person, in-depth interviews. Specific gaps identified included: a need for more advanced AEP classes, more CTE classes, and more Adults with Disabilities classes. When possible, funds are directly applied to close these gaps. One example of this was the hiring of a full-time faculty member at Irvine Valley College who now serves on the SOCRC. This new faculty member is 100% dedicated to closing the gaps being experienced by AEP students per our cohort study data. Another gap that is being addressed is the lack of Adults with Disability courses. Several new sections (5) of AWD courses are being offered to this AEP population in fall semester of 2018 at Saddleback College. An additional gap was the lack of an auditory language lab which was funded at Irvine Valley College for all AEP AESL students to use and enjoy. This lab was launched during the 2017-2018 academic year, thanks to AEP resources. Multiple bridge events have been offered to respond to AEP students' request for main campus information and activities. The gap between our satellite programs and our main campus programs is being closed as a result of these well-attended events. During each SOCRC monthly meeting, opportunities are provided for SOCRC members to address specific program gaps and offer solutions.

How will you measure effectiveness / progress towards meeting this need?

Using different teaching modalities to increase persistence and retention: Our research indicates that courses are needed in multiple modalities to increase persistence and retention. The top two reasons for students leaving classes in BOTH 2016 and 2017 are: 1) Transportation, and 2) Family Obligations. To remedy this situation, the SOCRC members have provided two solutions. The first is to offer a combination of online/onsite hybrid classes. This idea was piloted by AESL teacher Jeff Dippel at Laguna Beach Unified School District with great success. The results were stellar: the only reason students left the class was due to an expired Visa or family emergency. 93% of those who enrolled were retained and completed the course. We are encouraging more of our members to adapt this online google classroom platform, which can be accessed for free from any public computer. The auditory listening laboratory at Irvine Valley College can also be used to access hybrid courses. Our professional development activities and resources in 2019 will be focused on the alternative teaching methodologies that adapt to the needs of AEP students. Jeff Dippel will be a keynote speaker at the Spring 2019 professional development activity, sharing his success with all AEP teaching faculty. The auditory lab will also be featured and is open for use by anyone teaching AEPG students. It has been used at capacity since its opening in 2018. The full-time AESL faculty member who was recently hired is now a member of the SOCRC and will offer more information to faculty teaching AEP students on how to effectively use the lab as a resource. Our measure of effectiveness will be the number of faculty who learn about the hybrid platform, and adopt some of its "on the go" teaching capabilities. An additional measure of effectiveness will be the number of faculty, staff and students who use the auditory laboratory at Irvine Valley College for instruction and tutoring. Over 500 AEP students have used the lab to increase both their conversational and pronunciation skills.

Regional Need #2

Gaps in Service / Regional Needs

Since the Adult Education Program spans a large portion of the South Orange County Region, it is often difficult for faculty and staff to gather and assess the impact of the courses and programs we are offering to our students. During our monthly SOCRC meetings, a gap in service has been identified to share teaching best practices among our AEP faculty. A regional need has arisen to provide dynamic, current professional development to our AEP faculty and staff.

How do you know? What resources did you use to identify these gaps?

As part of the Data and Accountability Study, faculty and staff were also interviewed as to the effectiveness of the SOCRC programs being offered. While the faculty and staff felt that our curriculum, instruction and resources were excellent, they expressed a need to come together to discuss this special population of AEP learners and how we can more effectively serve them in the future. Our first series of professional development events were focused on who our students were and what their needs were. Now that we are entering our fourth year of programs, we have this information. We now want to close the faculty/staff gap of communication by offering targeted professional development activities that address how to best serve these students. To achieve this, we will be asking onsite AEP faculty to share their best teaching practices. We will also be asking our classified staff across our sites to share information on how to streamline AEP student registration, counseling and transfer services. Our goal is to compile a best practices and services handbook that may be accessed online by faculty and staff to help them better serve AEP students. The return on investment from this process will be enhanced instructional techniques, better retention and completion rates of students, and enhanced professional development for AEP faculty and staff. AEP courses are offered in remote sites, at times that are convenient for the students. This can result in a lack of support for faculty teaching during the evening hours or a lack of connectivity with the general faculty. We are addressing this gap by asking seasoned, tenure-track faculty to work with and mentor newer faculty with their teaching experience. We will provide an identical mentorship opportunity for those senior staff who have worked on sites for many years to provide inspiration and good practices to our newly-hired staff. Our goal is to offer a variety of teaching and administrative tips to our faculty and staff to empower them to better serve our students in the 2018-2019 academic year. We are also planning on creating an SOCRC/AEP newsletter to alert the larger faculty community as to our activities and accomplishments. This effort will be made in conjunction with site administrative staff.

How will you measure effectiveness / progress towards meeting this need?

Effectiveness will be measured by the accomplishment of key performance indicators. These KPIs will include: 1) The number of faculty and staff attending the SOCRC Faculty Development workshops; 2) The number of faculty and staff sharing best practices as presenters at the SOCRC Faculty Development workshops; 3) The Best Practices handbook generated by these professional development events as a quick, online reference guide for those who teach or work in the program and serve AEP students; 4) The evaluations of the professional development events and employee satisfaction and 5) The outcomes of the professional development days with dedicated goals and objectives generated by the larger group.

Gaps In Service

New Strategies

Strategy #1

Strategies to Increase Capacity: The 2018-19 academic year will be pivotal for increasing the SOCRC's growth and capacity. We have 10 viable, hard-working members and well-established connections in the region such as the Orange County Department of Education, Strong Workforce Initiative and Orange County Regional Workforce Group. We will ask all of these members and groups to actively participate in both our strategic planning and strategic management processes for the 2018-2019 program year

Strategy #2

Strategies to integrate existing programs: The SOCRC has designated multiple onsite programs to integrate their existing practices into the fabric of our AEP. For example, we are allocating resources, staffing and time to working with California Career Advantage (CCA), to ensure that the CTE programs being offered (Dental X-Ray Tech, Pharmacy and Surgical Tech) have updated accreditation status. We are working to ensure that all CTE courses are currently accredited for student certificates.

Strategy #3

Strategies to accelerate existing programs: While the SOCRC has added many new programs this year, there is always room for growth. Our partnerships are now firmly established. This year, our main strategy for acceleration will be infusing technology whenever possible. We want our new auditory lab at Irvine Valley College to be used by more students. We want our faculty across sites to consider using a hybrid online/onsite platform. We also want faculty to consider online textbooks.

Strategy #4

Strategies for professional development: The SOCRC made an executive decision to outsource our professional development days this year. Everyone is so busy working with AEP students that a professional firm has been hired to work with and through our faculty to engage them in two professional development days for 2018-2019. This expert will focus on persistence, retention and best teaching techniques to plan activities that are both rewarding and rejuvenating for our faculty and staff.

Seamless Transitions

New Strategies

Strategy #1

As previously mentioned, the South Orange County Regional Consortium works directly with the Orange County Regional Workforce Group. Our compliance officer regularly attends the regional workforce meetings, gathering important information as to economic trends in the region. For 2018-2019, we will ask the regional chair of this group to come and speak to our SOCRC members and to highlight the efforts of the Regional Work Group. We work directly with our Deputy Sector Navigator for success.

Student Acceleration

New Strategies

Strategy #1

We have identified multiple strategies to implement and to improve curriculum and services being offered by the SOCRC. Our Data and Accountability research has provided us with the gaps we need to address. We have adopted evidence-based strategies from the AEP Summit, such as sharing learning outcomes across our Unified School Districts and the South Orange County Community College District sites to ensure student success. We have adjusted course schedules with accelerated programs for CTE.

Professional Development

New Strategies

Strategy #1

For shared professional development, our emphasis this year will be on faculty best practices. We will work to create two dedicated professional development sessions in 2019 to benefit our faculty, staff and students. These sessions will feature best practices that will help our AEP faculty to deliver the highest-quality instruction and support strategies possible. They will be half-day events with curriculum for all who attend. Participants will be given access to online best practices.

Leveraging Resources**New Strategies****Strategy #1**

We have leveraged multiple assets for our SEP program at the SOCRC. One example would be our ongoing collaboration with California Career Advantage to provide state-of-the-art Pharmacy, Surgical and Dental X-ray courses for AEP students. To enhance these classes, our faculty and staff have networked with local dental and medical organizations to assist AEP students with their placement after course completion. Our faculty have contacted local employer groups to serve as advisors to students.

Fiscal Management**A narrative justifying how the planned allocations are consistent with the annual adult education plan which is based on your AEBG 3-year plan.**

The SOCRC has taken a strategic alignment approach to spending planned allocations that is consistent with both our annual and three year plans. Specifically, based upon our Mission and Vision Statements, the SOCRC members have created overarching goals, objectives and action steps that are directly linked to our resource allocations. Monthly-report outs guarantee that we are all updated and aware of the spend downs by our individual members. Requests for large capital outlay amounts are required to be presented to all SOCRC members for review and approval. Any site that is having delays in spending allocated funds is coached by our Executive Committee members to remove roadblocks and delays. Our objectives and action steps are further tied to individual key performance indicators for the SOCRC. We have a bi-annual review of expenditures and open discussions pertaining to the return on investment of the funds. Any expenditures that have been deemed as ineffective are reallocated under program guidelines. We continually remind our SOCRC members of the allowable and unallowable spending parameters prescribed by the Adult Education Program. If SOCRC members are replaced, we offer a variety of human and paper resources to ensure that they are aware of spending and reporting deadlines. Internal training is also part of our orientation process for the SOCRC members. Those institutions who have had longer tenure with the AEP will often mentor junior SOCRC members in terms of spending guidelines. The SOCRC Compliance Officer is also available at all times to address allocation issues and questions. She ensures that all expenditures are in alignment with SOCRC strategic, annual and three year plans. We often consult AEP personnel to ensure that we are in alignment with our resource allocation and regularly attend the technical AEP webinars, reporting back to our consortium members.

An approach to incorporating remaining carry-over funds from prior year(s) into strategies planned for 2018-19.

Every effort is being made to reduce the total amount of funds being carried over by SOCRC members. Specific strategies have included: 1) Requesting monthly updates on percentages of funds expended by members; 2) Collective review and approval of State documents such as the CFAD and other key collaterals that show distribution of funds; 3) Heavy involvement of South Orange County Community College District Fiscal Services Administration and Staff for large transactions; 4) Ensuring that funds are released to sub-recipients in a timely manner to ensure that they are able to expend them on schedule. We have streamlined our efforts to make communication and information regarding budget expenditures available to all members. Our Compliance Officer constantly reminds the consortium members as to key deadlines for expending funds.

She keeps in informal record of funds being expended, as they are reported at the SOCRC meetings. This also helps with aggregate fiscal reporting that is required. Our fiscal representatives from both the unified school districts and the South Orange County Community College District are in constant contact regarding AEP expenditures. We have healthy, collaborative professional relationships and are able to keep all sub-recipients current with their funds. All efforts are made to mitigate the amount of carry-over funds from sub recipients. If funds are carried over, we have aggressive timelines for spending them down and tying them to AEP Program Objectives as much as possible.

Certification

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Approved

2018-08-15

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2018-08-22

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