

## 05 Greater Opportunity Through Adult Learning

CONSORTIUM APPROVED

2024-25

### Plans & Goals

#### Executive Summary

##### Achievements

Over the past year, the consortium's work has been significant in terms of collaboration. After going through several staff changes, the new team has been able to foster relationships and approach the work collaboratively. A working group of connectors at each institution has met regularly to connect and evaluate needs. This has led to integration of noncredit workforce development skills courses from the college with programs at partner institutions. Other groups, such as the transition specialists, have continued their excellent work by meeting regularly and sharing vital information regarding their direct support of students. This group has been further strengthened with the addition of newer members such as representatives from the local Workforce Development Board and the counselor from the Watsonville/Aptos/Santa Cruz Adult Education (WASCAE), as well as community partners and other relevant department representatives from the consortium members.

Our members have achieved great success by developing and implementing new programs, including our adult school receiving a highly competitive federal grant. WASCAE and the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County applied jointly for the 2023 Citizenship and Integration Grant Program for Citizenship Instruction and Naturalization Application Services. This grant, which provides funding over two years, enables these two organizations to coordinate county-wide citizenship instruction, including wrap-around social services for immigrants seeking US citizenship. They have already seen an increase in students benefiting from this program. This is a great example of WASCAE's collaboration with other community organizations in order to better serve the community.

Meanwhile, the Santa Cruz County Office of Education (SSCOE) through their adult education division has made great progress in their program offerings. They are the proud recipients of the California Apprenticeship Initiative (CAI). This grant awards \$1.02 million and will support offering paid-on-the-job training to a total of 68 dental assistant students over the grant term. In terms of innovation, their newest program is the Fire Academy, which came to fruition by collaborating with CALS, CAL FIRE, and California Conservation Corps. This is a great example of SSCOE's commitment to in-demand careers that can lead to employment after graduation. It's worth noting that they worked diligently and were able to implement this new program in a short period of time.

The transition specialists participated in a community of practice offered by the California Adult Literacy Professional Development Project (CALPRO) titled: Supporting Student Transitions to Postsecondary Education and the Workforce. The invitation was extended to neighboring Adult Education consortia, and we had participants from our area as well as our neighbors from Monterey county. It was a great opportunity, and this is where the need to create a HUB for resources and information that the transition specialists can utilize originated. This has been adopted as a strategy for the upcoming year.

Regarding Noncredit certificates of completion, Cabrillo has made significant strides. This was a crucial goal in our three-year plan, and we are proud of both the work achieved so far and the progress yet to come. These certificates offer numerous benefits to the population we serve, with two key advantages being that they require no legal status and are tuition-free. Cabrillo has excelled in expanding these offerings and promoting them. In addition, Cabrillo has made efforts to create a means for adult learners to feel welcomed and valued when entering college pathways by developing a Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) process. The CPL team has established a clear process to facilitate noncredit students, industry certified students, returning veterans, and re-skilling professionals onto the credit pathway with acknowledgement of the skills and learning that many adult students bring to the table. Implementation of the CPL process is expected in the coming year.

The Career Education dean dedicated resources to revamp marketing and increase awareness through the creation of bilingual (English and Spanish) flyers and an updated website. This website allows students to easily find certificate offerings by semester and subject area. This effective approach helps share information and inform the public about the wide variety of certifications available. Some of the certificates include: Digital Music Production, Berry Production, Basic Construction, Accounting for Payroll, Google IT Support, Cybercamp Community Health Worker & Dental Infection Control.

Challenges

(to be continued in the next section)

## **Regional Planning Overview**

Challenges

(Continuation from the Executive Overview)

One of the biggest challenges in our service area is finding qualified faculty members. WASCAE, for example, has the challenge of the various requirements of the K-12 system, which requires a teaching credential. Even when the college wants to refer one of their associate faculty members, they can't due to them only having a master's in the subject area but not a teaching credential. This was the reason why the math class collaboration between WASCAE and Cabrillo was delayed; it took a long time to find an instructor who met the requirements.

Similarly, the community college faces challenges when looking for instructors in their career education areas. Most people working in the trades can make a significantly higher salary in their area of expertise compared to teaching, making part-time teaching positions less attractive. Not only is the pay not attractive, but the qualifications required do not tend to align with the educational and professional background of potential instructors.

Concerning data management, implementing a centralized data system remains a challenge. Consortium members diligently provide updates on their program enrollments. However, Launchboard and CommunityPro have not proven to be optimal solutions for compiling our data. Consequently, one of our strategies moving forward will be to evaluate the CommunityPro platform and assess its effectiveness in meeting our specific needs.

## **Regional Planning Overview**

The consortium will continue developing programs that address both regional needs and student priorities. Our goal is for our students to earn degrees that will enable them to enter the workforce and secure living wages.

We recognize that the length of this journey varies for each student. Through the consortium, we provide support to our students at every stage of their educational path. We offer courses for those working on their literacy, those wanting to learn English, those completing their high school diploma (either through credit recovery or by taking the GED), as well as a variety of technical career programs and transfer and degree opportunities.

To achieve these academic goals, it is essential to have comprehensive support services in place, along with a well-developed curriculum and detailed instructional mapping.

## **Meeting Regional Needs**

### **Regional Need #1**

#### **Gaps in Service / Regional Needs**

Based on our three-year plan, community needs assessment, and the 2024 Santa Cruz County State of the Workforce report, we can identify key regional and service needs.

The report highlights growth in the "Building and Design industry cluster (growing by 10.4%)" and the "Healthcare industry cluster, the largest industry cluster employer in the county, growing 7.5% from 2021 to 2023". In lower-wage sectors, "Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation" expanded by 23% from 2021 to 2023. Our three-year plan indicated strong adult learner interest in healthcare and hospitality, underscoring the need for expanded program offerings.

We currently have a wide range of offerings in health care, but the need is still there. We understand that our job is not limited to offering the right programs, but also providing the support necessary for the students to reach their goals.

Unfortunately, due to errors in the Chancellor's Office interpretation of Launchboard data, we did not receive the ELL Health Grant awarded to adult education consortia in the state, which would have been helpful in supporting our work.

It is also a must to address the cost of living in the area, which is a significant barrier for our students. The report states, "between 2020 and 2021, nearly 8,200 residents left Santa Cruz County, representing a 3.0 percent decline in the county's population. While the county gained nearly 1,700 residents from 2021 to 2022, representing a 0.6 percent population increase, the county lost almost 2,300 residents from 2022 to 2023, reversing the previous year's growth". The high cost of living is forcing many residents to either leave the area or face significant financial strain. These challenges disproportionately impact low-income communities, which often overlap with communities of color and immigrant populations. And these are, in large part, the communities we seek to serve.

One of the major factors cited in the report for the increased cost of living in the area is due to housing costs: "Santa Cruz County continued to increase, with median single-family home prices continuing to exceed the statewide average in 2023. The percentage of county residents who can afford a median-priced home has also decreased sharply over the last three years... In households with two working adults and two children, each adult must work 1.8 Tier 3 jobs to meet the living wage determination in Santa Cruz County."

It must be noted that Tier 3 jobs are "typically the lowest-paying, lowest-skilled occupations and tend to account for the largest share of jobs in the County. These occupations include food service and retail jobs, building and grounds cleaning positions, and personal care positions. With an average annual salary of \$47,000 or \$22.62 average hourly wage". Not only are these low-paying jobs, but there has also been a decline in employment within some of these sectors with the report noting "the Agriculture and Food industry experienced a 7.2 percent employment decline". Despite these challenges, these industries employ a significant portion of our students. For us this presents an opportunity to provide advanced training within their current field or facilitate career transitions through new skill development.

The increasing living costs in the area exacerbates barriers identified in the three year plan by students and community members who participated in the focus groups and answered our survey. They reported challenges such as the ability to take time off work due to increased work hours or multiple jobs. Other barriers include: childcare, educational expenses, transportation, and costs associated with technology access.

According to the United States Census Bureau 2022 ACS, 27.3% of the Santa Cruz County households make less than \$49,999 per year. The poverty rate for the county, according to the United States Census Bureau, is 12.9% which is higher than the California average of 12.2%.

The United States Census Bureau also indicates that 30.6% of households speak a language other than English at home, with Spanish being the primary language at 23.9%. In terms of education, according to the 2022 CAEP Fact Sheet, 11.2% of individuals over 18 have not completed high school. The demand for English language courses and high school diplomas or GEDs remains substantial in the area, and we must strive to reach as much of the community as possible.

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

These gaps were identified by using the following databases, tools and reports:

- The Community Needs Assessment.
- Consortium members data, survey and focus groups.
- Santa Cruz County Labor Market
- United States Census Bureau

- CAEP Fact Sheet

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

The consortium will closely track student data from CASAS and local MIS to identify trends in program enrollment, completion, and post-secondary outcomes. Key performance indicators will include:

- Enrollment growth: Expansion of student participation across all programs, with a particular focus on...
- Graduation rates: Increased numbers of students earning high school diplomas, equivalencies...
- Student achievement: Improvement in math and English proficiency, job skills, and literacy...
- Post-secondary success: Enhanced transition rates from adult education to higher education...
- There are year round data and performance updates to the board and stakeholders.

By analyzing these metrics, the consortium will gain valuable insights to inform program enhancements and support student success.

## Address Educational Needs

### 2024-25 Strategies

**Strategy Name**

WildFire Academy Implementation by the Santa Cruz County Office of Education

**Activity that Applies to this Strategy**

Provide SCCOE Students CTE Instruction

**Metrics that Apply to this Activity/Strategy**

- Employment and Earnings: Median Change in Earnings (AE 801 - Overall)

**Strategy Description**

As outlined in the three-year plan, the Santa Cruz County Office of Education (SCCOE) is expanding its CTE offerings. This new program aims to provide students with an in-demand career path. Two pilot programs have been completed. SCCOE will continue partnering with CALS, CAL FIRE, and the California Conservation Corps on other potential collaborations or changes to the current offerings based on the training needs of participants and needs in the community. Given that this is a new community program, marketing support is essential. It presents a remarkable opportunity, as the program offers adult students CAL FIRE and NWCG certifications crucial for entry-level firefighting positions. Partners will identify and refer potential students

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**Strategy Name**

Expand integration of career preparation courses into SCCOE programs

**Activity that Applies to this Strategy**

Provide SCCOE Students CTE Instruction

**Metrics that Apply to this Activity/Strategy**

- Employment and Earnings: Participants Who Became Employed in the 2nd Quarter After Exit (AE 505 - Overall)

**Strategy Description**

This strategy has proven successful and is currently underway. We aim to expand its reach by offering more courses for current programs and additional members. Cabrillo College provides a series of DMCP (Digital Management & Career Preparation) courses. Examples include DMCP 402: Preparing for Employment, which focuses on identifying professional skills and building resumes, and DMCP 403: Professional Career Search, which covers job application strategies and interview preparation. These courses are integrated into SSCOE programs like dental and medical assisting. Ideally, we would offer more courses or flexible formats to meet student needs. This is where we face some challenges as the college's capacity limits course offerings. Through creativity and collaboration, staff from both organizations have successfully delivered these courses. Expanding course availability would enable students to take multiple courses and potentially earn certificates. WASCAE is promoting these courses to identify student demand and inform future offerings.

**Strategy Name**

WASCAE and Cabrillo Math Class

**Activity that Applies to this Strategy**

Expand program (ESL/ABE/ASE/CTE) access & support

**Metrics that Apply to this Activity/Strategy**

- Progress: Participants with Educational Functioning Levels Gains ABE (AE 400 - ABE)
- Progress: Participants with Educational Functioning Levels Gains ASE (AE 400 - ASE)
- Transition: Participants with Transition to Postsecondary (CTE) (AE 636 - Overall)
- Transition: Participants with Transition to Postsecondary (credit college) (AE 637 - Overall)

**Strategy Description**

The pilot program featured a math class offered by WASCAE on the Cabrillo campus. A Memorandum of Understanding established that WASCAE provided instruction and enrollment while the college contributed facilities at no cost. The program aimed to familiarize students with the college system and resources, easing their transition from pre-transfer to college-level math courses. As previously noted, instructor shortages delayed the program's launch. While morning and evening classes were initially planned, finding a teacher available to teach in the morning classes has been challenging.

Following the pilot semester, the collaboration will expand. Through collaborative meetings, faculty, administrators, and counselors identified strategies to attract and support students. Key challenges include targeted marketing, curriculum alignment, and simplifying the enrollment process for college students, which currently involves adult school enrollment and the CASAS test. To enhance accessibility, the Fall 2024 course will be offered evenings at both campuses. Additionally, the instructor will promote the class during the first two weeks of Cabrillo math courses.

**Improve Integration of Services & Transitions**

**2024-25 Strategies**

**Strategy Name**

Evaluation of Community Pro

**Activity that Applies to this Strategy**

Expand program (ESL/ABE/ASE/CTE) access & support

**Metrics that Apply to this Activity/Strategy**

- Transition: Participants with Transition to Postsecondary (CTE) (AE 636 - Overall)
- Transition: Participants with Transition to Postsecondary (credit college) (AE 637 - Overall)

**Strategy Description**

The consortium has worked to integrate student data, information, and a referral system using CommunityPro or MyJourney software as outlined in the three-year plan. Despite significant investment and increased implementation efforts over the past two years, the consortium will be conducting a thorough evaluation of the software's challenges and limitations. Transition specialists have attempted to integrate software use into their daily routines, but numerous obstacles prevent optimal utilization. These challenges include managing various local forms and engaging in frequent, brief student interactions that often go unrecorded. For example, multiple college departments may be aware of WASC AE and its GED/HS program and ESL courses without effectively capturing referral information. To address these issues, we will critically assess the software's actual benefits this year.

For instance, while concurrent enrollment data can be extracted, accurate dual enrollment reports—crucial for a significant student population with a unique enrollment process—are unavailable within that system. Additionally, integrating data from various member institutions' student management systems often incurs extra costs and presents integration challenges and accuracy based on reporting frequency.

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**Strategy Name**

HUB-Transition Specialists and Resources

**Activity that Applies to this Strategy**

Cabrillo's Transition Specialist

**Metrics that Apply to this Activity/Strategy**

- Transition: Participants with Transition to ASE (AE 500 - Overall)
- Transition: Participants with Transition to Postsecondary (CTE) (AE 636 - Overall)
- Transition: Participants with Transition to Postsecondary (credit college) (AE 637 - Overall)

**Strategy Description**

To enhance support for adult learners, we aim to develop a centralized hub or website tailored to transition specialists. This platform will serve as a comprehensive repository of current and pertinent information from various members and local agencies. Recognizing the diverse and evolving nature of support services provided by transition specialists beyond academics, we seek to streamline their work by consolidating essential data in one accessible location. This will ultimately improve outcomes for the adult learner population.

A significant obstacle to achieving this goal is the absence of a dedicated individual responsible for maintaining the platform's accuracy and currency. Ensuring that information remains up-to-date and reliable is crucial for the hub's effectiveness. Additionally, fostering a collaborative approach that incorporates resources from multiple member agencies is essential. This is also something new that will require adoption and consistency from all parties involved.

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**Strategy Name**

Website Revamp

**Activity that Applies to this Strategy**

Increased Access & Onboarding

**Metrics that Apply to this Activity/Strategy**

- All: Adults who Became Participants (AE 202 - Overall)
- Student Barriers: Low Literacy (AE 311 - Overall)

**Strategy Description**

The GOAL website will undergo a redesign with a focus on enhancing user experience, accessibility, and information clarity. Key improvements will include:

- **Simplified navigation:** We are streamlining the website's structure to make it easier for visitors to find what they need.
- **Comprehensive course offerings:** To better showcase the full range of consortium courses, we will consolidate course listings from all member organizations into a single, easy-to-navigate section.
- **Enhanced student engagement:** We are exploring innovative ways to improve interaction with our content, such as interactive guides and personalized recommendations.
- **Multilingual accessibility:** To better serve our diverse audience, we plan to introduce a website interface that supports multiple languages.

These enhancements aim to create a more user-friendly and informative platform that effectively supports the consortium's goals and meets the needs of our students. Some of the potential challenges will be collecting all course offerings by the various members and formatting them in the same way. So far, who will be in charge of submitting this data has not been identified as this will be a new task.

Along with the website revamping, we would like to modify our logo to make it more clear that we provide adult education. Just displaying "GOAL" can be misleading at times.

**Strategy Name**

First Professional Development Day

**Activity that Applies to this Strategy**

Professional Learning Communities

**Metrics that Apply to this Activity/Strategy**

- Progress: Participants with Educational Functioning Levels Gains ABE (AE 400 - ABE)
- Progress: Participants with Educational Functioning Levels Gains ESL (AE 400 - ESL)
- Transition: Participants with Transition to ASE (AE 500 - Overall)

**Strategy Description**

The consortium will host its first professional development day focused on retention for faculty, administrators, and support staff. This event aims to strengthen collaboration among member organizations by fostering interaction and connection. Building on the current collaboration of other groups, we aim to expand our reach to include teachers and support staff. To encourage participation, member agencies will incentivize staff attendance.

We envision a welcoming atmosphere that breaks down organizational silos, allowing attendees to connect and share experiences. Retention is a universal challenge affecting all staff, regardless of role or organization.

While this is our first such event, presenting both challenges and opportunities, we are confident in creating a positive experience that can serve as a foundation for future initiatives. Key challenges include developing effective promotional strategies to encourage participation and ensuring the event meets expectations for people to want to attend again.

## Improve Effectiveness of Services

### 2024-25 Strategies

#### Strategy Name

ESL Alignment

#### Activity that Applies to this Strategy

Data Informed Decision Making

#### Metrics that Apply to this Activity/Strategy

- Progress: Participants with Educational Functioning Levels Gains ASE (AE 400 - ASE)
- Transition: Participants with Transition to ASE (AE 500 - Overall)

#### Strategy Description

The three-year plan prioritized aligning ESL curriculum across consortium members. While progress has been made with the universal adoption of the Ventures curriculum, achieving full alignment has proven challenging.

This challenge is particularly evident as transition specialists assist students in transferring between institutions or exploring different program options. One of the most common questions students have is “what English level do I need to be part of X program?”. Determining appropriate English language proficiency levels is crucial for student success. By having a consortium wide alignment, these questions can be answered by transition specialists and other staff. Considering the consortium does not have counselors at the consortium level serving the different members, this type of alignment becomes even more important.

To address this ongoing issue, we aim to reinitiate the process of comprehensively reviewing and aligning ESL classes and curricula by working with a consultant. This effort was previously initiated but paused due to staffing changes. We are opting to work with a consultant as teacher involvement hasn't been as robust as we would have liked, and this would be an added duty.

#### Strategy Name

Continued Offering of IELCE and IBEST Courses

#### Activity that Applies to this Strategy

Improve contextualized class offerings IELCE

#### Metrics that Apply to this Activity/Strategy

- Employment and Earnings: Median Change in Earnings (AE 801 - Overall)
- Progress: Participants Who Complete an EL Civics COAPP or Course (AE 411 - Overall)
- Transition: Participants with Transition to Postsecondary (CTE) (AE 636 - Overall)

#### Strategy Description

Maintain and potentially expand Integrated English Language and Career Education (IELCE) and Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (IBEST) course offerings. These class models have proven effective in supporting student success in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs while directly addressing workforce needs. Both WASCAE and Cabrillo College currently implement these course models.



WASCAE's IELCE courses, specifically English for Personal Care Aide (held in Santa Cruz) and English for Green Building and Welding Fabrication (held at the Career and Technical Education Center in Watsonville), experienced robust student enrollment this year. This work will be supported by \$39,000 awarded to WASCAE for positive outcomes in their IELCE program.

Meanwhile, Cabrillo College continues to offer five IBEST-supported courses in the fields of Early Childhood Education, Construction and Energy Management, and Community Health Worker.

As a consortium, we seek to explore avenues for expanding these successful programs. A primary challenge for the college is the substantial cost associated with the current two-instructor model. To mitigate this, the college will investigate alternative approaches such as incorporating student employees to assist teachers or leveraging online platforms like EnGen and in this way expand the number of courses offered with ELL support. Implementing an online platform would necessitate faculty buy-in, requiring additional dedicated time and effort.

### Strategy Name

Community Approach-Cabrillo Community Health Worker Program

### Activity that Applies to this Strategy

Review and improve CTE programs

### Metrics that Apply to this Activity/Strategy

- Employment and Earnings: Median Change in Earnings (AE 801 - Overall)
- Transition: Participants with Transition to ASE (AE 500 - Overall)

### Strategy Description

Cabrillo College currently offers a Community Health Worker (CHW) Program, a field experiencing high demand locally. This career path aligns well with the skills and bilingual abilities of our students. Unfortunately, enrollment in the program has declined since the pandemic.

To revitalize this valuable program, Cabrillo is exploring a community-based approach through partnerships with local agencies. One such partner is Salud Para La Gente, which not only collaborates on the program but also employs program graduates. The CHW courses are tuition-free, culminate in a certificate, and incorporate IBEST support. Notably, the program welcomes students of all English proficiency levels, creating an inclusive learning environment.

### Strategy Name

Noncredit Medical Terminology Course

### Activity that Applies to this Strategy

Pathways & Noncredit Development

### Metrics that Apply to this Activity/Strategy

- Success: Participants Who Earn a Postsecondary Credential (AE 625 - Overall)
- Transition: Participants with Transition to Postsecondary (CTE) (AE 636 - Overall)

### Strategy Description

Given the diverse healthcare programs offered by consortium members, a non-credit medical terminology course would significantly enhance student success. The college has expressed support for developing such a course. However, the institution

faces substantial challenges due to the prolonged course approval process, which can take up to a year or more, and current budgetary limitations.

Despite these obstacles, there is a clear and robust student demand for medical terminology, as evidenced by the seven currently offered credit-based sections. A non-credit option would better align with the needs of our target population.

While the dean and department chair are supportive of this initiative, their existing workloads preclude them from actively participating in curriculum development. Consequently, identifying an additional instructor, potentially an associate faculty member, will be essential to move this project forward.

## Fiscal Management

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

A established oversight structure ensures fiscal integrity and programmatic alignment. The consortium Director reviews member spending to verify adherence to major object codes and compliance with NOVA regulations. Regular board meetings provide a platform for comprehensive discussions on policies, procedures, and program performance.

Each member submits detailed written and verbal reports at every board meeting, offering transparency into program implementation, challenges, and achievements. This rigorous reporting aligns precisely with the three-year and annual plan objectives, fostering accountability and continuous improvement.

By maintaining a commitment to CAEP Fiscal Guidance and AB 104, the consortium guarantees that all expenditures directly support the goals and strategies of the three year and annual plan.

**An approach to incorporating remaining carry-over funds from prior year(s) into strategies planned for 2024-25.**

The consortium is actively working to minimize carryover funds, but unfortunately, we ended the fiscal year with approximately \$1.7 million in remaining funds. To enhance transparency, we have implemented regular carryover updates during our board meetings.

PVUSD, our largest member in terms of enrollment and funding, accounts for the majority of the carryover with \$1.6 million. They have presented potential capital projects and a comprehensive overview of their financial situation. A detailed spending proposal will be submitted in October 2024.

PVUSD has identified potential student-centered initiatives that align with our three-year plan, such as launching an LVN program, exploring childcare services, and hiring an additional counselor.

The consortium is committed to a collaborative approach in determining the optimal use of these one-time funds. We are currently developing a comprehensive strategy that will involve input from all member districts. A timeline for finalizing spending decisions will be established in the coming months

## Certification

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