

14 Desert Regional Consortium

Plans & Goals

Executive Summary

Desert Regional Consortium (DRC) Board members represent adult education institutions from throughout the Coachella Valley and bring a deep understanding of the diverse population they serve. The driving principles since the creation of the DRC was to expand access to English as a Second Language (ESL), High School Diploma (HSD), High School Equivalency (HSE), Adult Basic Education (ABE), and Citizenship (CIT) programs have been successful. These classes, including Spanish or dual-language options, serve the most basic underlying academic and linguistic needs of the region. Due to the pandemic, remote and hybrid formats were created to meet the needs of the adults of the Coachella Valley. The regional framework, along with the intent to share resources across historical boundaries, allows the DRC to expand and adapt programming based on equity, current and future needs, as opposed to specific institutional budget priorities and limitations.

Desert Regional Consortium Members: Coachella Valley Adult School (CVAS), College of the Desert (COD), Desert Edge School Adult Education Program Riverside County Office of Education, Desert Sands Unified School District (DSUSD), Palm Springs Unified School District (PSUSD), Riverside County Office of Education School of Career Education (RCOE SCE).

Coachella Valley Adult School (CVAS) and College of the Desert (COD) are the region's largest providers of adult education programs and services. While CVAS focuses on serving adult learners in the Coachella Valley and southern parts of the region, COD serves adult learners throughout the entire region. DSUSD and PSUSD are K-12 districts that partner with CVAS and COD, respectively, to provide satellite adult education programs within those districts, but currently do not offer stand-alone adult education programs.

The innovative resource sharing partnership between local school districts and their respective AE partners has been recognized by CAEP as a "Practice with Promise" and the partnership between CVAS and DSUSD is highlighted on the CAEP website. RCOE serves all Riverside County and is a member of two additional CAEP consortia: the Southwest Consortium and the Riverside Consortium. Within the DRC, RCOE members represent both Desert Edge in the Indio Jail, Indio Day Reporting Center, and the School of Career Education in Indio. Institutional data provides insights into the reasons students enroll in the AE courses provided by DRC members. Students enrolled at each institution reported the following primary goals for their enrollment: CVAS students are interested in improving their basic skills, achieving a high school diploma/GED, learning English. COD students are interested in basic skills, as well as entering college or training programs. All RCOE SCE students are interested in obtaining employment, industry certification and higher learning. Desert Edge students' goals vary, but include obtaining a GED/HSD, improving basic skills, and getting a job.

Metric data from CalAdultEd 2020-21 Fact Sheets, LaunchBoard, US Census Data, our DRC Research Development Associates Assessment and other professional assessments, reflect the need to continue expand course offerings to assist our adult students, who fall into low poverty, low unemployment, and low literacy levels to achieve their primary goals.

The DRC annual plans reevaluate and focus on specifics of the Three-Year plan to be accomplished or updated. As the DRC proceeds, additional adjustments and funding will be made to our new Three-Year Plan to deal with unplanned changes via the CFAD and DRC Annual Plan. WIOA members use funds to supplement current programs. Other non CAEP funds also supplement current CAEP programs.

Regional Planning Overview

The Desert Regional Consortium is fortunate to be part of a vibrant, growing economic region. The challenge will be to expand and align career and technical education pathways with current and future industry need. Construction, Healthcare, Renewable Energy, and Supply Management and Logistics are especially promising seasonally stable industries. The consortium should be able to leverage the region's existing resources to develop partnerships that will help to expand workforce opportunity for adult learners throughout the region. There are challenges, but they are surmountable given the consortium members' enthusiasm and expertise.

Meeting Regional Needs

Regional Need #1

Gaps in Service / Regional Needs

The Desert Regional Consortium established the DRC Three-Year Plan Committee of DRC Consortium members and partners to review and self-assess performance and the population it serves over a period of several months. Following the CAEP Three-Year Plan 2022-2025 Infographic as a timeline guide, the DRC spent several weeks conducting the CAEP Consortium Program Quality Self-Assessment tool with members and partners reviewing, and reporting on each assessment category. Consortium members and Partners were able to provide input at all collaborative committee meetings and describe monthly progress of programs at roundtable discussions. Members and partners also provided narrative using Google Doc or at in-person meetings to finally achieve consensus for all six sections of the Three-Year Plan.

The summary of key data points as educational needs as identified by the American Community Survey for the Desert Regional Consortium: Identified 57,868 limited English Speaking adults with 100% speaking less than well. Identified 93,005 adults (21%) with no high school diploma. Identified 93,880 adults at near poverty or less. Identified 31,741 unemployed adults. US Census, as well as other assessments reinforce the same key data points. In 2017, the summary of key data points as educational needs as identified by Research Development Associates specific for the DRC: Identified 27% adults with no high school diploma. Identified the majority (79%) of residents in the CVUSD region speak Spanish. Identified more than half of households in the CVUSD (61%) and PSUSD (57%) areas make less than \$50,000 per year. Identified residents of the CVUSD area age 20 years and older consistently have higher unemployment rates than any other region The California Employment Department identified the City of Coachella with the highest unemployment rate in Riverside County for January 2022 at 11.5% and Mecca at 9% Implications amplify previous needs assessments of the Coachella Valley by the DRC and current data points. Since the previous assessment in 2017, the DRC has expanded adult education programs and services, strengthen adult education partnerships, increased capacity and increased counseling services for transition of students.

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

The DRC used the following assessments to evaluate effectiveness and identify needs:

U.S. Census Data, specific to the Coachella Valley

Inland Empire/Desert Regional Career Education Programs, Pathways & Employers Report

Labor Market Data - Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research

Desert Regional Consortium Needs Assessment - Research Development Associates

TOPSPro/CASAS Testing Data

American Community Survey 2020 Demographic Data by Key Subgroup - CalAdultEd Fact Sheets - 2021

California Employment Development Department

Agency attendance records

Labor Market surveys from Workforce Investment Board Employment and Earnings Reports

Barriers to Employment Survey results

Quarterly and past years review of agency Data Integrity Reports

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

The DRC's three-year projections are to increase the program's visibility in the eastern Coachella Valley, thereby increasing the number of learners from that area by twenty individuals per year, for an overall increase of 60 new learners. The projected new learners will be geographically located in the following areas: North Shore, Mecca, Coachella, Thermal, and Indio. To seamlessly transition students from Adult School to College, the DRC has helped develop a one-of-a-kind innovative regional partnership. Through this partnership with the City of Coachella and the Coachella Valley Adult School, College of the Desert has continued the commitment to offering a guaranteed two-year General Education (GE) schedule at the Coachella Library. Upon completion, students earn a Certificated of Achievement and meet the GE requirements to transfer to UCs, CSUs and

other four-year institutions. To ensure students have a seamless transition, College of the Desert has included a special web portal on their web page to assist Adult School students in their application process. DRC Consortium members will coordinate adding transition counselors to assist adults and create a pathway higher education possibilities. The DRC will establish transitional support collaboration between member agencies for the purpose of guiding students through post-secondary college and career educational pathways. Creating smoother pathways for students to achieve their educational and vocational goals may include improving communication and outreach, hiring cross-agency To accelerate the workplace transition of English as a Second Language students, the Desert Regional Consortium has begun to develop short term Integration of Education and Training programs. These programs allow English Language Learners to co-enroll into CTE courses and ESL classes allowing students to obtain industry recognized certificates at accelerated rates.

The DRC will use various indicators for measuring student progress to include:

The Desert Regional Consortium ESL and HSD/HSE instructors will continue to meet in Monthly PLC committees with the goal of increasing the number of students achieving level gains and progress toward achieving HSD/HSE credentials. Quarterly, DRC member reports will be reported at DRC scheduled meetings to review progress towards achieving goals. Each member is responsible for continued progress.

in the short term, ESL students' technology needs are assessed and met. By June 30, 2023, the DRC will maintain or exceed the number of high school graduates by 3% as compared to the number of graduates from the 2019-20 school year.

Improve Integration of Services & Transitions

2022-23 Strategies

Strategy Name

Enhancing Learner Outcomes

Activity that Applies to this Strategy

Enhancing Learner Outcomes

Metrics that Apply to this Activity/Strategy

- Student Barriers: Low Literacy (AE 311 - Overall)

Strategy Description

As stated previously, the DRC's three-year projections are to increase the program's visibility in the eastern Coachella Valley, thereby increasing the number of learners from that area by twenty individuals per year, for an overall increase of 60 new learners. The projected new learners will be geographically located in the following areas: North Shore, Mecca, Coachella, Thermal, and Indio. To seamlessly transition students from Adult School to College, the DRC has helped develop a one-of-a-kind innovative regional partnership. Through this partnership with the City of Coachella and the Coachella Valley Adult School, College of the Desert has continued the commitment to offering a guaranteed two-year General Education (GE) schedule at the Coachella Library. Upon completion, students earn a Certificated of Achievement and meet the GE requirements to transfer to UCs, CSUs and other four-year institutions.

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Second Language students, the Desert Regional Consortium has begun to develop short term Integration of Education and Training programs. These programs allow English Language Learners to co-enroll into CTE courses and ESL classes allowing students to obtain industry recognized certificates at accelerated rates.

Address Educational Needs

2022-23 Strategies

Strategy Name

Address Educational Needs

Activity that Applies to this Strategy

Enhancing Learner Outcomes

Metrics that Apply to this Activity/Strategy

- Student Barriers: Low Literacy (AE 311 - Overall)

Strategy Description

The DRC members may have the opportunity to leverage additional funding sources and make creative use of current funding streams thereby closing Gaps in Service. Several institutions such as CVAS, COD, and RCOE receive WIOA funds, and the opportunity exists for more regional funding through this and other government grant programs. Some members, such as CVAS, are working with community-based organizations or nonprofits that already receive grant funding. These relationships could lead to additional grant funding for joint programs. Local businesses may also be willing to support AE efforts through financial aid and paid apprenticeships, as they are doing for K-12 career academies. Currently Desert Sands USD leverages district funds at the Eisenhower Education Center to provide adult education services in conjunction with consortium members CVAS and COD. The DRC primarily serves a largely Hispanic and low-income communities, especially in the more eastern and western areas of the region. Communities to the east include a large non-English-speaking migrant population. The DRC is committed to recruiting, hiring, and retaining qualified staff to teach adult education ESL, High School Diploma and CTE classes in the Desert Region remains a challenge due to the pandemic. Regional economic planning efforts do not specifically nor consistently include Adult Education efforts. options. DRC urban and rural populations can be described as “transient;” thus, personal information can quickly become outdated and outreach efforts or attempts to provide educational continuity are difficult. Nonetheless, the DRC is committed to reviewing DRC and Workforce analysis data on a quarterly basis to ensure not only appropriate classes are placed in the correct regions of the Coachella Valley, but also classes that reflect the needs of the student for academic and/or workplace success.

Improve Effectiveness of Services

2022-23 Strategies

Strategy Name

Address Strategies and Activities

Activity that Applies to this Strategy

Enhancing Learner Outcomes

Metrics that Apply to this Activity/Strategy

- Student Barriers: Low Literacy (AE 311 - Overall)

Strategy Description

The DRC has made great progress in developing resource-sharing agreements between specific members to expand the regional AE system. The consortium has benefited from examining additional strategies such as developing a shared process to develop articulated curricula and share resources for students across different agencies. Increased coordination of counselors has resulted in an exchange of best practices that has benefitted the consortium as a whole and has contributed to a more consistent student experience. While the DRC has moved toward collaboration as it has expanded the geographical reach of programs, it is still working to reconcile historical or traditional boundaries between providers with current and future capacity needs. In the past, organizational red tape and system misalignment among DRC members has hindered program and service coordination. This contributed to inefficiencies such as duplication of administrative efforts and transition barriers for students. The move to a more fully integrated, regional AE system has eliminated previous gaps in service areas. Regional unemployment data and community input is examined on a quarterly basis to ensure classes are placed in the locations of most need targeting adults with high unemployment, limited English skills, and adults with no high school diplomas. DRC will partner and consult with Local Workforce Development Board and Riverside County Agencies to improve student transitions into the workforce. Additionally, the three Coachella Valley school districts (Desert Sands USD, Palm Springs USD and Coachella Valley USD) will continue to maximize resources by utilizing the instructors and administrative staff from College of the Desert and Coachella Valley Adult School. Given the high unemployment rate that has transpired as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, the DRC will collaborate and to create shared goals. DRC will create a shared workforce employer advisory with Riverside County College of Career Education. The DRC will continue to engage in available Professional Development resources from CALPRO, OTAN, CAEP, and CASAS – both in-person, online (synchronous and asynchronous) and in hosting local events for the benefit of the entire consortium (i.e., localized workshops). Possible topics may include data-driven decision-making, equity minded practices, growth mindset practices, and raising awareness about the needs and motivations of adult learners. The DRC will continue to invest time and energy in professional development activities that will strengthen the efficacy of their work and the unity of the consortium.

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.

All Desert Regional Consortium members unanimously approved the previous DRC Three-Year Plan, which contains various ongoing /new programs, as well as pilots to be implemented. CAEP funds are allocated for administering existing /new school sites, purchasing required administrative reporting software/hardware, staffing, maintaining faculty, providing counseling, professional development, and upgrading /replacing equipment. The DRC annual plans reevaluate and focus on specifics of the Three-Year plan to be accomplished or updated. As the DRC proceeds, additional adjustments and funding will be made to our new Three-Year Plan to deal with unplanned changes via the CFAD and DRC Annual Plan. WIOA members use funds to supplement current programs. Other non CAEP funds also supplement current CAEP programs.

An approach to incorporating remaining carry-over funds from prior year(s) into strategies planned for 2022-23.

Following the CAEP recommendation of First in First Out (FIFO), the DRC Consortium Director, in conjunction with the member business departments, monitor the rate of expenditures to determine the first allocated budget is spent in a timely basis and adequate carryover funds are available for subsequent years. The CAEP Adult Education Program Fiscal Program Guide recommends spending targets of 15% Quarter 1, 30% Quarter 2, 45% Quarter 3 and 60% Quarter 4, targets based on the current active funding for the 12-month period (July 1st to June 30th), which includes all active carry-over funds and any new

funds. The member fiscal year or 12-month budget in NOVA reflects all active funding. Failure to meet targets will result in a corrective action plan. In the event a member is unable to spend its allocated budget, the funds may be allocated after an agreed upon majority vote by the DRC. Via MOU unspent funds will then be allocated to other DRC member(s) with the proviso that the funds will be fully spent, and invoices fully paid by the end of the Quarter 4. All funds must be spent as per the CAEP Adult Education Program Fiscal Program Guide and in accordance with the Three-Year Plan.

Certification

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08/08/2022 11:04 AM PDT

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