

# 31 Gateway Adult Education Network

## Plans & Goals - Consortium Approved

### Executive Summary

The Gateway Adult Education Network Consortium (GAEN) is one of the 71 adult education consortia in the state of California. GAEN serves Merced County, Mariposa County, and the City of Chowchilla in northern Madera County. The GAEN region consists of a large but lightly populated area in the San Joaquin Valley which includes mountainous, agricultural, semi-urban, urban, and rural communities. Such a diverse region provides opportunities for adult education expansion but also raises challenges related to serving such a large area. Regional demographics show that more than 55,000 out of 206,907 adults do not possess a high school diploma or equivalent. The GAEN consortium will continue to assist hundreds of students to become educated and career ready in the 2020-21 school year. The consortium's top priority is providing high-quality education services to meet the needs of current and potential students throughout the region. To accomplish this, GAEN has created a three-year plan to improve adult education services beyond the year 2020. GAEN has selected goals to focus its efforts on maintaining an active collaborative process, enhancing successful transitions to college and career for students, and better serving students with disabilities. During the next year, GAEN will be implementing new strategies, such as an Individual Learning Plan for all students in the region, increasing workforce and career services, and strengthening partnerships with local and regional agencies.

### Regional Planning Overview

GAEN has selected new strategies to be implemented to close any gaps and meet the needs of our current students as well as potential students in our region.1. GAEN consortium plans to work on recruiting more community partners, industry, and educational agencies. These partners will be part of the Advisory Committee that will be meeting at least once per year. During the advisory meetings, the partners will have the opportunity to evaluate programs being offered, identify gaps in services, and provide potential solutions.2. GAEN Consortium plans to work on completing an Individualized Learning Plan and Program of Study for every student within the region. This ILP/POS will show aligned and articulated work and the transition from course to course, program to program, and post-secondary or the workforce.3. The GAEN consortium will continue to work with local agencies such as MCOE ROP, Central Valley Regional Center, and the Department of Rehabilitation to sustain an educational and career program for Adults with Disabilities. This program is specializing in helping adults with disabilities to learn the necessary skills to work in the food and hospitality industry. The students will learn customer service, point of sales experience, food preparation, opening and closing procedures, catering, and inventory, among other skills that will help the students obtain a job in the hospitality industry. Overall, there has been a quick shift to online instruction to respond to COVID-19. Districts have implemented the use of masks with one-on-one teaching sessions, are following safety protocols, instructing via Zoom, Canvas, or other LMS platforms, providing laptops to students in need, and engaging in creative tactics to reach out to students. Budget uncertainties are real for our consortium. We are grateful for the additional funding that has been provided for 2020-21, especially after receiving news earlier in the year of a potentially large reduction, however, the threat of reductions in future years creates challenges for planning, developing, and implementing services across our consortium. Systemic racial injustices are not subject taken lightly. We are building training models, providing professional development, reviewing data for marginalized populations, hosting Healing Circles, and providing resources for those who are otherwise left without.

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## Meeting Regional Needs

### Regional Need #1

#### Gaps in Service / Regional Needs

Despite the large geographical area of our consortium, there are overlapping needs resulting in gaps of services region-wide that can be summarized as basic skills acquisitions, serving our Adults with Disabilities, transportation, and the new threat of budget uncertainties due to COVID-19. As it relates to basic skills acquisitions, there is a large need for GED, High School

Diploma, ESL, and basic computing classes. These classes contribute to a student's ability to not only progress in their educational attainment, but in securing higher-wage employment, and in some cases, coming out of poverty. Serving our Adults with Disabilities has been included not only in our 3 year plan, but it is part of each annual plan. The plan specifies the development and implementation of a culinary program to prepare adults with disabilities to work in the food industry. Although the program has been developed and implemented, there is no dedicated funding stream for this program. COVID-19 uncertainties do not help with the stability of this program, or with any of our adult education courses. Lastly, the new threat of budget uncertainties poses a risk to fully meet our needs, such as that previously mentioned with our Adults with Disabilities, but also in meeting transportation, childcare, and other needs of our students to facilitate their participation in our classes. In addition, COVID-19 has added a new layer of having to outreach to students in a new modality that relies on online education outside of a physical classroom. In a perfect world, our funding would allow for each of our students to have access to a laptop, but this is not the case due to budgetary constraints

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

We know of these gaps because we collect data from our recent graduates, prospective students, and the community at large. In a recent needs assessment conducted by an external contractor in fall 2018, all of the deficiencies mentioned in the previous question were identified. The recurring theme is that some students are unable to join our classes due to some or all of the barriers previously mentioned. And now, during a pandemic when distance learning is the safest method of instruction, additional barriers relating to Internet connectivity and computer access are affecting our students' ability to enroll, attend, and progress in our classes.

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

Effectiveness of meeting our needs will be measured via increases in the number of adults served, completion rates, employment attainment, and certifications, improvement in CASAS testings, and a decrease in transportation needs.

## Gaps In Service

### New Strategies

**Strategy #1**

Transition services to better transition students from basic skills attainment to college, vocational education, or employment. This is being done via staffing support to help in the transition as well as phone calls and online orientations for students. The Adults with Disabilities program continues to advocate for additional partners and funding to support and sustain the program. Similarly, the consortium will advocate and seek to partner with our local transportation organization to provide a lower-priced bus pass for students and/or provide travel vouchers for students.

**Strategy #2**

Budgetary conversations will need to be held in order to continue the discussion and reallocation of funds to the Adults with Disabilities program, needs that arise due to COVID-19, and methods to grow in unserved areas.

## Seamless Transitions

### New Strategies

**Strategy #1**

A major component to the long-term success of our students is being able to transition to college coursework, vocational training, and/or employment. Through the utilization of staff and educational plans, this can be accomplished by having regular contact with the personnel and resources in our consortium schools, including our local community college and vocational training providers, and/or local employee partners. Merced College is committed to working on articulating coursework with K-12s to add more or create new courses/programs for adult students.

**Strategy #2**

The continued partnership between adult schools and Merced College can also be enhanced by more contextualized forms of instruction while students are attending adult school classes. For example, teachers can conduct mock interviews to teach the interview process, which will teach students not only employability skills but help them develop skills to be successful and resourceful citizens in both the academic and working world. This will aid them in transitioning to college and/or the workplace.

**Student Acceleration****New Strategies****Strategy #1**

The consortium will continue to advocate for online platforms that increase the educational success of students, mirrored courses to allow students to save time and money via the completion of college credit while attending adult education courses, and providing more contextualized learning in the classroom.

**Professional Development****New Strategies****Strategy #1**

There are varying levels of professional development needs and resources being made available at different member agencies. It might be helpful to develop a consortium-wide survey to assess the needs of all our instructors and plan accordingly based on the survey results. As with anything recently though, we will remain flexible in this area as new demands/needs arise due to COVID-19.

**Strategy #2**

A large contributing factor to being able to reach remote areas is through the partnership with K-12 schools to utilize classroom space, utilities, equipment, etc. free of charge to the adult schools. These contributions help our efforts to reach as many adults as possible. We will need to continue this practice when we are safely able to return to face-to-face modalities.

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

As previously mentioned, we are able to meet more student needs via partnerships established with local K-12s, libraries, AJCCs, and other local organizations to develop education and career opportunities for adult students in our region. For example, students who need services, such as on-the-job training, resume development, and/or job-seeking assistance let us know and then we refer them to the local AJCCs--locally known as WorkNet. If necessary, WorkNet can meet the student via video or phone conference from our school site. Likewise, WorkNet will also refer students to our school site if a student needs to complete a High School diploma, GED, or learn English. We will continue to work with these local organizations to strengthen our partnerships and maximize resources for our students.

## 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.

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**An approach to incorporating remaining carry-over funds from prior year(s) into strategies planned for 2020-21.**

GAEN members review the Carryover Proposal Modification Requests to approve the use of carryover funds for one-time student-centered projects.

## Certification

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