

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 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, including mountainous, agricultural, semi-urban, urban, and rural communities. Such a diverse region provides opportunities for adult education expansion and 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 in becoming educated and career-ready in the 2021-22 school year. The year 2019-20 was a challenging year; however, the GAEN consortium had 81 high school graduates; 60 students passing the GED test; 5 students earned their US citizenship, and 190 students completing short-term CTE courses and obtaining certifications. In addition, the GAEN consortium connected the students with support services to help alleviate the COVID19 related struggles the students faced during the 2019-20 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 2022. 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. 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 and 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 complete 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, the 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 specializes 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 distance learning instruction to respond to COVID-19. Districts have implemented masks with one-on-one teaching sessions, 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 2021-22. However, the threat of reductions in future years creates challenges for planning, developing, and implementing services across our consortium.

Meeting Regional Needs

Regional Need #1

Gaps in Service / Regional Needs

Despite the large geographical area of our consortium, overlapping needs are resulting in gaps of services region-wide that can be summarized as basic skills acquisitions, serving our Adults with Disabilities, transportation. 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 progress in their educational attainment, secure higher-wage employment, and, in some cases, flee 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 the full expense of the program. COVID-19 has added a new layer of 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 each of our students to have 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 cannot 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?

The 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 transition and phone calls and online orientations for students. The Adults with Disabilities program advocates 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.

Strategy #2

Budgetary conversations will need to be held to discuss the reallocating of funds to support the Adults with Disabilities program and methods to grow in unserved areas. For 2021-22 the GAEN consortium has dedicated a small portion of the overall budget to support the Adult with Disabilities program. Even though it is a small portion, it is a move in the right direction.

Seamless Transitions

New Strategies

Strategy #1

A major component to our students' long-term success is the transition to college coursework, vocational training, and/or employment. By utilizing staff and educational plans, 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.

Strategy #2

More contextualized forms of instruction can also enhance the continued partnership between adult schools and Merced College while students are attending adult school classes. For example, teachers can conduct mock interviews to teach the

interview process, which will teach students employability skills and 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 students' educational success, mirrored courses to allow students to save time and money via college credit completion while attending adult education courses, and provide 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.

Leveraging Resources

New Strategies

Strategy #1

As previously mentioned, we can 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, let us know about students who need services, such as on-the-job training, resume development, and/or job-seeking assistance. Then we refer them to our GAEN Job Developer and subsequently 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.

The Fiscal Agent is requesting quarterly Financial Status Reports (FSRs) from its members. The FSRs are reviewed to complete appropriate support documentation and ensure it is consistent with the submitted work plans. Once reviewed by the Accounting Technician, they are routed to the Fiscal Agent's Certifying Official for additional review. The FSRs are routed back to Fiscal for record-keeping. The Fiscal Agent then reviews the reported expenditures against the approved member's budgets.

The members complete a Budget Modification Request Form that is then routed for approval at the GAEN Board Meeting. The Fiscal Agent receives all approved Budget Modification Request Forms and updates members' budgets as applicable. Each Consortium Member provides expenditure reports by object code to the fiscal agent, validated and combined for the Consortia to be reported to the State. Consensus and approval for the programs to be served in our Consortium were agreed upon at the April 15th, 2021 GAEN Board Meeting. All members' work plans include details about the populations to be served, and the work plans were approved at such a meeting. As a Consortium, we serve within all seven categories, based on the needs of the region. Regarding the 5 percent for administrative costs, the Fiscal Agent has agreed not to charge more than 5% of the AB104 funds allocated to the Consortium for administrative responsibilities. The Fiscal Agent will track hours spent for managerial procedures and only actual charge expenses, not to exceed 5% of the award amount.

An approach to incorporating remaining carry-over funds from prior year(s) into strategies planned for 2021-22.

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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