

**60 Solano Adult Education Consortium**

CONSORTIUM APPROVED

2024-25

**Plans & Goals****Executive Summary**

The Solano Adult Education Consortium (SAEC) is an engaged and committed group of six agencies serving over 5,000 students in the region between San Francisco and Sacramento. The diversity of our communities is reflected in our students, including immigrants from Afghanistan, Haiti, Iran, Central America, Brazil and El Salvador. We make data-driven decisions and leverage our regional partnerships to offer programs that meet student needs. Our student enrollment is up 12% over the 2022-23 program year, and our persistence is consistently above state average.

During the 2023-24 program year, the Fairfield-Suisun Adult School was honored with a statewide "Making A Difference" award for their Cultural Inclusion Club which guided students to advocate for adult education programs during the 2024 Legislative Action Day in Sacramento. Several students from the Vallejo Adult School who completed a rigorous CALRegional Healthcare CTE program were featured in a professional video shared at the California Council for Adult Education (CCAEE) Bay Area conference. The Benicia and Muzetta Thrower/Vacaville Adult Schools leveraged their creativity and responsiveness to community needs by piloting a successful doula class and an EKG certification class which will both be repeated in the 2024-25 program year. Our schools created new ESL classes at the local High School for parents upon request from the local police department, and on Saturdays via remote instruction. Activities impacted during COVID were reinstated including campus tours for prospective college transfer students and face to face professional development sessions for our teachers and staff.

Our 2024-25 Annual Plan continues the work outlined in our Three Year Plan, with a focus on increasing awareness about adult education in our region and facilitating transitions to college for our adult education students. To do this, we will expand our outreach programs and stay engaged with our partners while remaining sensitive to changing needs of our students and staff, via monthly and ad hoc meetings, surveys, and reflection. SAEC will re-examine strategies to increase student participation rates across the seven program areas and participate in webinars and conferences to stay on the cutting edge of instructional and programmatic best practices.

**Regional Planning Overview**

The Consortium meets monthly to review initiatives, reflect on goals and objectives, and identify strategies to remove roadblocks to success. Several ad hoc subcommittees meet on a quarterly or as-needed basis to support DEI initiatives, review Data and Accountability, update our Bylaws, and plan Professional Development.

Members of the consortium are highly engaged with the community, and have met with representatives from parent groups, police departments, PEACE and KidsTurn programs (Solano Superior Courts) and ELAC/DLAC at monthly meetings. We gave Senator Bill Dodd adult ed flyers for a recent public resource fair, and engaged with him during two different Legislative Days in Spring 2024. SAEC members partner with the Solano Black Chamber of Commerce, NAACP, CHMRC Healthcare, and the League of Women Voters for voting drives and special events. We've engaged at First5 (Vallejo) family events.

SAEC continues to work in partnership with the Workforce Development Board (WDB) of Solano County, and the consortium manager is now appointed to their Board of Directors. This shared representation facilitates goal alignment and partnership. The WDB has identified strategic career pathways in the areas of healthcare, manufacturing and construction, and a brand new local initiative with Biotechnology. The WDB has identified needs for the workforce around digital literacy and English Learners, both of which SAEC agencies are well-positioned to meet. In addition, the WDB is invited to join Consortium workgroup meetings to share upcoming job opportunities and programs that would be relevant to the member agencies.

## Meeting Regional Needs

### Regional Need #1

#### Gaps in Service / Regional Needs

##### RN-1 : Increase awareness of adult education programs

Student enrollment increased significantly (12%) between the 2022-23 and 2023-24 program years. However there are still unanswered needs, as evidenced by wait lists at some schools for classes, fluctuations in immigrant populations, and lingering impacts to education and employment due to the COVID pandemic. Information shared by our partners at the Workforce Development Board (WDB) and various public-serving agencies also indicate that adult education is not clearly understood and frequently miscategorized by leaders in government, commercial industries, and even higher education.

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

During meetings during the past year with legislators, our board members noted that they were unfamiliar with adult education programs and the populations we serve. Discussions with college-level administrators, K12 school administrators and counselors, and commercial business leaders also showed a lack of understanding about the amazing potential our students have as well as their resilience to overcome obstacles..

The SAEC Consortium continues to review key data points that address educational needs, transition/integration, and service effectiveness. The data presented under each finding statement below is derived from data provided by CASAS, U.S. Census, Lightcast job market data, and stakeholder surveys and interviews:

##### 1) Consortium Key Informant Meetings:

This activity leveraged the existing practice of conducting small discussion groups (1-3 people) to engage directly with each SAEC agency and elicit perspectives on current system/service strengths, challenges, gaps, student barriers, and emerging needs. This was an opportunity to discuss current Consortium data metrics and facilitate future planning discussions.

##### 2) Consortium Program Quality Self-Assessment Survey

This self-assessment tool was created by CAEP to help consortia evaluate their effectiveness in the following key areas: Capacity, Connection, Entry, Progress, and Completion/Transition. This self-assessment was completed in January 2024 by the consortium manager with input from all the SAEC board members, and reviewed with our assigned TTA coach. The group averaged 3.33 across all criteria.

##### 3) Additional Data Analysis:

The planning team utilized CAEP fact sheets, previous annual plans, information presented at statewide conferences and webinars, US census data, regional labor market data, workforce development board plans, and economic impact study reports to identify the current and emerging needs in education, workforce, and economic needs within Solano County's communities. The planning team also reviewed consortium-level and member-level student demographics, success, and transition data from LaunchBoard and TOPSpro Enterprise (TE) to identify gaps in service, relevant trends, and compare against regional data to identify gaps in populations served.

The Annual Plan is reviewed throughout the year via an iterative process that has proven to be effective among our Board members:

Strategy Development #1: Consortium manager met individually with SAEC board members to review their fall programs and reflect on how those choices supported the Annual Plan. The TTA coach also participated in one-on-one meetings with board members as requested.

Findings Presentation: Consortium manager shared multi-year comparative statistics from TE regarding Q1 enrollment and prior year outcomes during October board meeting.

Strategy meeting #1: During the March board meeting, members reviewed the 2023-24 Annual Plan and evaluated progress to date. Short-term successes were noted, and action items were assigned to members and the consortium manager.

Strategy meeting #2: During the June board meeting, members reflected on their accomplishments to date against their Annual Plan, and chose strategies to emphasize in the new 24-25 Annual Plan.

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

Progress will be statistically assessed by tracking enrollment using TE data with the goal of increasing this indicator by 5-7% in 2024-25 from the 2023-24 consortium totals.

Evaluating "awareness" is more difficult, however TE enrollment data will ultimately reflect improvements in this area. Our strategies that expand our contact with key sectors and increase both student referrals and overall community presence will provide long-term benefits for all our adult education programs in Solano County.

**Regional Need #2**

**Gaps in Service / Regional Needs**

**RN-2 : Improve college transitions**

We hope to identify and reduce barriers to college transitions for our students through a multi-pronged approach. Career exploration is the first step, identifying career pathways and evaluating student strengths. Second, we hope to provide a roadmap to achieve those goals, by engaging our partners at Solano College and the WDB. Adult ed counselors will continue to provide tactical assistance to students completing their application and FAFSA forms, and connecting them with supportive services (transportation, childcare, financial aid, food/housing, legal/DACA, and health services).

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

Data sources include the following:

- > CAEP Summary Tables (TOPSpro Enterprise)
- > LaunchBoard college transition data
- > Meetings with adult ed counselors and students
- > Feedback from college admissions counselors

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

If we are successful in this strategy, increases will be reflected in TE as well as LaunchBoard in number of students transitioning to Solano College. Refinements to record keeping by the adult ed counselors regarding number of students served and in what capacity will help measure needs and outcomes more accurately. Expanding our newly-created quarterly Counselors' Council networking meetings that include WDB career navigators, the Office of Education, and adult agency individuals who offer supportive services (without a counseling title) will enable new channels of communication. Establishing a data sharing agreement with the IT Dean at the college will be explored as well.

**Address Educational Needs**

**2024-25 Strategies**

**Strategy Name**

SN-1 : Coordinate and expand marketing and outreach efforts to increase enrollment

**Activity that Applies to this Strategy**

Create an enrollment campaign

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

- All: Number of Adults Served (AE 200 - Overall)

**Strategy Description**

Several SAEC Consortium activities are planned for the 2024-25 year:

1. Utilize results of student and staff surveys to fine-tune programs, schedules and curriculum.
2. Explore and expand outreach initiatives in our communities.
3. Sustain, expand, and refine adult education courses to reflect changing community needs. This may include expanding Hyflex instruction and expanding digital literacy skills coursework.
4. Facilitate conversations among consortium members about emerging CTE programs, promising practices, and ways to leverage partner services to bolster our schools.
5. Emphasize the importance of recording all student demographics, attendance, goals, outcomes and especially CAEP services in TE for more accurate year-end analysis.

In summary, we expect these activities will produce increasingly effective, high-quality course offerings that meet or exceed out learners' needs, evidenced by quantifiable improvements during year-end reviews.

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### Strategy Name

SN-2 : Increase advocacy efforts

### Activity that Applies to this Strategy

Create an enrollment campaign

### Metrics that Apply to this Activity/Strategy

- All: Number of Adults Served (AE 200 - Overall)

### Strategy Description

1. Build and expand existing relationships with local politicians and community groups to stay "on their radar." Tactics may include subscribing to their newsletters, inviting them to attend consortium and member functions, and notifying them of agency awards and student achievements.
2. Refresh relationships with external media such as local newspapers and radio stations for increased exposure about the role adult education plays in Solano County.
3. Leverage student success stories to motivate new students to inquire about our programs.
4. Thoroughly scrub community websites, referral pages, Google listings, etc. for outdated or incorrect information about our schools. Encourage Yelp and Google reviews by students.
5. Reach out repeatedly to local high schools to offer proactive intervention for students ages 18+ who are at risk of dropping out.

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### Strategy Name

SN-3 : Identify resources for immigrant, refugee, and undocumented students

### Activity that Applies to this Strategy

Identify resources for undocumented students

### Metrics that Apply to this Activity/Strategy

- Student Barriers: English Language Learner (AE 305 - Overall)

**Strategy Description**

1. Refocus original idea of a survey for undocumented students to something more inclusive serving a larger population of students, in a manner that is perceived as culturally sensitive.
2. Gather a list of resources in our area that support struggling populations, and provide it to our schools' staff and counselors as well as posting it on our websites. Update the lists annually.
3. Leverage relationships with other consortia and organizations outside Solano County such as Immigrants Rising to enhance existing initiatives, or be guest speakers at consortium events.
4. Explore entrepreneurship programs that the WDB offers which undocumented students are able to join.

**Improve Integration of Services & Transitions****2024-25 Strategies****Strategy Name**

SN-4 : Refine dual enrollment and college transitions programs

**Activity that Applies to this Strategy**

Refine dual enrollment program

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

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

**Strategy Description**

1. Expand and nurture the quarterly Counselor's Council networking meetings to improve communication between the adult ed schools, the college counseling staff, the Solano Office of Education and the WDB. This will provide coordinated and comprehensive services in career exploration and career pathway mappings for our students.
2. Schedule meetings with the Dean of CTE and the Dean of Enrollment s at Solano College to provide updates to adult ed agencies at the beginning of the school year.
3. Continue to schedule campus tours with engaging speakers a few weeks before each semester registration period opens.

**Strategy Name**

SN-5 : Develop Pathways to Employment

**Activity that Applies to this Strategy**

Strengthen connection with WDB

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

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

### Strategy Description

1. Continue to leverage our seat on the Solano Workforce Development Board to learn about regional initiatives at the ground level. Share WDB notes and agenda with SAEC Board members.
2. Invest resources and energy into supporting a new initiative in 2025-26 in Biotechnology. This is being promoted by Vacaville City Council and the Solano WDB and identifies the adult ed schools as a feeder program to Solano College's certificate and degree programs.
3. A Navigator from the WDB will be present on-campus at each school on a monthly basis to meet with students. Expansion of this program to include specific topics (e.g., resumes) will also be investigated.

## Improve Effectiveness of Services

### 2024-25 Strategies

#### Strategy Name

SN-6: Improve customer service at school sites

#### Activity that Applies to this Strategy

Create an enrollment campaign

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

- All: Number of Adults Served (AE 200 - Overall)

### Strategy Description

1. Create a very welcoming environment for students. Use Diversity, Equity and Inclusion skills to create an environment that is comfortable for students.
  2. Consider using an ILA translation device at the front desk to allow prospective student's to communicate in their native language.
  3. Invite a CALPRO speaker to discuss "Cultural Sensitivity" at the next professional development (PD) day. Invite all staff members.
  4. Create a survey for students to describe the initial and ongoing experiences in this regard. Use responses to identify gaps and correct inequities.
  5. Contact WDB to request a customer service class.
- By "minding the gaps" between first contact with students and completing at least 12+ hours of instruction, we will increase our persistence rates to meet or exceed the state goals for 2024-25.

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#### Strategy Name

SN-7 : Review and analyze CAEP data quarterly

**Activity that Applies to this Strategy**

Review and analyze CAEP data on a consistent basis

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

- Progress: Participants with Educational Functioning Levels Gains ABE (AE 400 - ABE)

**Strategy Description**

1. Consortium Manager will continue holding Data and Accountability workgroup meetings quarterly. These are valuable sessions to review best practices, discuss observed data trends, confirm accuracy of data in TE, review changes to data reporting software, and discuss challenges in meeting grant deliverables.
2. Consortium manager will use TE data to present board members with analytical information at least twice a year, such as three year enrollment trend along with demographic comparisons for consideration in their program development and budget allocations.
3. Consortium manager will update the SAEC Fact Sheet with aggregated year-end statistics. This has been a valuable tool for starting conversations with legislators (see strategy SN-2) and meeting with new contacts referred by the WDB.

**Strategy Name**

SN-8: Offer a consortium-wide PD Day for adult ed teachers and staff and consortium members

**Activity that Applies to this Strategy**

Identify and share PD opportunities

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

- Progress: Participants with Educational Functioning Levels Gains ABE (AE 400 - ABE)

**Strategy Description**

1. Leverage the expertise of CALPRO and CASAS to inform our teachers and staff about the latest developments.
2. SAEC Board voted to schedule an all-day, face-to-face event before the beginning of the fall semester, in August 2024. The Board formed a PD Committee to choose speakers and handle details for the event.

**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.**

Each year, the annual CAEP Fund allocation is distributed from the state to members in good standing who receive their base allocation percentages from the previous year (Education Code 84914). These percentages were returned to historical levels in the 2024-25 CFAD following guidance from the CAEP Office. These metrics were initially created based on data such as the US Census, job market analysis reports, immigrant relocation trends, and high school graduation rates. The consortium common cost is carried by the member who employs the Consortium Manager (currently Vallejo City USD). with an annual budget approved by the SAEC Board.

The CAEP three-year plan identified several long-term initiatives such as increasing enrollment, improving retention, and producing measurable outcomes. The SAEC 24-25 Annual plan refines these goals, based on measured successes in the prior

year plus input from our staff, students, and partners. Our enrollment, persistence, and outcomes are tracked and reported quarterly to the state, and discussed during public meetings.

The consortium follows Education Code 84914 procedures for the allocation of the CAEP Funds through the consortium annual plan and budget development process which each district agrees to through the annual fiscal approval certification (CFAD). The funds will be utilized exclusively for the purposes outlined in the Adult Education Program guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to, instructional costs, program development, resources for adult learners, and any other expenditures directly related to adult education and outlined in the California EC sections 52616 and 52616.4. Furthermore, EC Section 84901 defines an "Adult" to mean a person 18 years of age or older and that these funds shall only be used to support adult students in the outlined programs.

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

Our consortium members do not anticipate significant carryover after the 2023-24 program year, in either consortium-level funds or member-level funds. SAEC will consider reallocating any carryover monies to fund special projects on a one-time basis for members. We researched methods used by other consortia and have modified a form that allows for a member to describe the purpose of the funding request and justify the need using data from sources such as TE, Lightcast industry data, vendor quotations from suppliers, and other supporting information. This form will be submitted to the Board and included as an agenda item for consideration at publicly-held meeting. We revised our bylaws (April 2024) to identify 18% carryover as "excess" which will be evaluated at the end of each fiscal year.

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