

68 West Kern Consortium

Plans & Goals

Executive Summary

West Kern Adult Education Network (WKAEN) entered a Joint Power Authority (JPA) in 2017. At that time, as part of the consortium's Three-Year Plan, WKAEN's goals were to create an established system student intakes, assessments, counseling, and placement processes into the myriad of adult education pathways and workforce services. The formation of the WKAEN JPA allowed the consortium to leverage and localize resources and ultimately led to successful implementation of the Three-Year Plan, ultimately increasing services and student success as a whole. Additionally, West Kern County has seen a significant transformation that has encouraged countless students toward new pathways that lead to greater career mobility, economic growth, and community development. According to 24/7 Wall Street Index, the West Kern community is listed as one of the top fifty worst places to live. Keenly aware of the high needs this area holds, WKAEN sought out community partnerships throughout the area to leverage every resource for the benefit of the community who needed it most. As a result, the alignment of educational institutional resources has facilitated the growth of adult education and has allowed the consortium to deliver a vision that serves our population.

Core Values:

- Community involvement
- Respect & support toward students and employees
- Removing barriers
- Empowering student success

Core Purpose:

The core purpose of WKAEN is to develop and provide educational opportunities for adults leading to increased employment and/or higher education resulting in greater financial stability. This purpose is accomplished through the organization's core values:

- Removing barriers and empowering students
- Community involvement and awareness
- Respect and support shown to students and employees

Vision:

The consortium will ensure that all residents have access to sufficient and effective resources, training, and support required to meet the community needs for high school equivalency literacy, English as a Second Language (ESL), Civics and citizenship education. Currently, WKAEN is projected to serve 200 per AEP year. Currently, 318 non-duplicated students are being served. A total of 801 workforce certifications have been handed out since 2017 and WKAEN has had over 100 students graduate since 2019.

Due to West Kern's rural community, the needs of students remain the same: low high school equivalency attainment, a high unemployment rate, with 56% Hispanic/Latino population and 15% of those are not U.S. Citizens. This data shows that there is a high need for English as a Second Language (ESL). WKAEN will continue to prioritize IIF that will incorporate ESL, Spanish GED, parenting, financial literacy, computer skills, civics, citizenship, and ESL CTE courses. Looking forward to the next three years, WKAEN plans to expand many different areas of opportunity. In 2022 – 2025, WKAEN will complete updates on a building that will serve the Hispanic and Latino community. This new facility is located one block away from Jefferson Elementary, which serves a Hispanic and Latino student population of 80%. Classes such as ESL, civics, citizenship, parenting, financial literacy, computer skills, and ESL CTE will all be housed in this new building.

Further, back in 2019, WKAEN applied for and received the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA Title I) grant which totaled to \$200,000 and was expected to serve 20 students. Funding is used to provide job training through internships and mentoring for youth ages 18-24. Due to COVID, the first year of the program was put on hold but once the 2020 – 2021 school year was refunded, WKAEN's WIOA program ramped up recruitment and was able to meet the goals set by the grant. For the following 2021 – 2022, this program received an increase which totaled to \$263,244 to serve 35 students – fifteen more than the previous year. This program has been incredibly successful with WKAEN implementing a waitlist to add more students. WKAEN applied for the 2022 – 2023 WIOA grant and was awarded 769,719.00 for the upcoming school year, with the expectation to serve 100 students ranging from 18- 24.

WKAEN's Primary Goals:

- By 2023, increase the number of HSE graduates by 33%.
- By 2023, develop at least two accredited programs with state recognized certificates that lead students to gainful employment.
- By June 2023, apply and operate the WIOA II grant.
- By June 2023, hire 1 ESL teachers to teach ESL, civics, Citizenship fulltime during the daytime hours.
- By June 2023, operate a Home Care aide program that leads to a CNA program in ESL.
- Increase employment rate by 16% within our local company/industries.
- Represent adult education organizations who reside in rural area for the state of California and continue to advocate on the needs of these areas.

WKAEN will strive to be the best we can to meet the needs of the surrounding industries and ultimately, serve students in need with real-world skills.

Regional Planning Overview

During the next program year, WKAEN expects to expand current student pathways by offering personalized student counseling, instruction, and curriculum to enhance learner's job skills and basic education proficiency. WKAEN's goal is to remove barriers and empower students. In the next three years, the West Kern Adult Education Network will strive to continue to make an impact on the community that we serve by focusing on one student at a time. By creating the West Kern Adult Education Network (WKAEN), the West Kern Consortium has sparked a transformation in West Kern County to provide an avenue for stranded adults to obtain greater career opportunities. WKAEN's core purpose is focused on providing educational opportunities that will help get our students become employed or enrolled in higher education programs which will ultimately provide better financial stability. In order to accomplish this goal, WKAEN is utilizing a myriad of community collaborations that make it easy for students to identify the next steps and removing barriers from achieving their goals. Internally, WKAEN established protocols which have created "exemplary models" for individual program development, partnership development, post-secondary alignment, employer partnership development, internships, and work-based learning standards. These protocols are at the base of all decisions to ensure WKAEN is being intentional in its growth. To track these developments, WKAEN is also using consistent data collection processes which help set goals and objectives with timelines. Allowing for seamless integration of aligning programs with Taft Union High School and Taft College. Further, WKAEN plans to establish monthly advisory committees with Taft Union High School District and Taft College to emerge curriculum and ensure that the partnership between all involved entities is on track. For WKAEN's WIOA I program, modules have been put in place which allow students to get an easy-to-follow overview on expectations, next steps, and ultimately, meet all required guidelines found within the WIOA I program. WKAEN has created modules to assist students in WIOA I, to meet the required guidelines when utilizing any WKAEN-sponsored trainings or classes.

WKAEN will provide counseling for each student that is moving into the post- secondary pathway. Currently, this counselor is part-time and is connected to Taft College and conducts sessions at WKAEN once a week in the Career Center for two hours. Along with personalized one-on-one counseling services, comprehensive college pathways, and career exploration is available to any student interested in getting more information about their options. Looking ahead, WKAEN hopes to hire a second counselor that will help students gain soft skills training to further students in gaining skills to increase employability and stackable certifications. These certifications will provide an advancement to students in college who are preparing for their careers.

Meeting Regional Needs

Regional Need #1

Gaps in Service / Regional Needs

Located within Kern County, the West Kern Consortium is situated on the vast Midway- Sunset Oil Field, encompassing a 767-square mile area. The areas served in this diverse and rural population include Taft, Maricopa, Fellows, Elk Hills, McKittrick, and other census-designated places in West Kern. The communities of Taft and Maricopa are the primary population centers within West Kern County, and home to approximately 27,000 residents combined. Like many rural regions in California, adult education services within West Kern County were fragmented, and in many cases, non-existent. According to 24/7 Wall Street Index, the West Kern community is listed as one of the top fifty worst places to live. WKAEN top barriers are unemployment and low-income. The consortium, however, has made great strides and has sparked a transformation in West Kern County to provide a pathway to greater career mobility, economic growth, and community development.

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

Student intake data shows 59% of our clients reported having more than one barrier. This number increased to 70% in the 2021/2022 program year, with low income and low literacy statuses plaguing many of our students. Subsequently, transportation has also been a barrier for clients. Although many students report having a vehicle or access to a vehicle, many cannot afford to pay for additional gasoline. Therefore, many clients cannot accept jobs outside of West Kern. Local public transportation options exist, but services are limited. City transit buses, for example, operate to outlying areas such as Maricopa three times a day but do not offer weekend service. WKAEN does its best to assist these students by providing free bus passes and scheduling classes to accommodate the students living in outlying rural areas. WKAEN has also collaborated with several local industry partners who have previously hired many of their employees from Bakersfield. After collaborating with WKAEN and designing the curriculum to meet the industry's needs, these employers see the advantages of hiring the students locally as soon as they complete the classes. This partnership provides local industry employers with a strong local workforce, alleviating the immediate need for transportation.

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

Effectiveness will be determined by monitoring student outcomes data such as job placement, improved wage earnings, and literacy skills. In addition, as students earn high school equivalency diplomas, post-secondary training, and degrees/certificates, outcomes are logged in TOPSPro to update student records. To track these developments, WKAEN is also using consistent data collection processes which help set goals and objectives with timelines. Allowing for seamless integration of aligning programs with Taft Union High School and Taft College. Further, WKAEN plans to establish monthly advisory committees with Taft Union High School District and Taft College to emerge curriculum and ensure that the partnership between all involved entities is on track.

Regional Need #2

Gaps in Service / Regional Needs

WKAEN serves a population that is 56% Hispanic/ Latino population, 90% of our students are non-citizens.

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

Taft's current population is 8,945 residents this is a 4% decrease from since 2010. The average household income is \$56,627 with a poverty rate of 28%. Approximately 40% of people residing within the West Kern area have less than a ninth-grade education level while 37% are considered unemployed. 56% to Taft's population is Hispanic/Latino and 90% of our students are non-citizens.

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

After looking at current processes and upcoming goals for the organization, WKAEN sees the next three years as a period of expansion. In 2022-2025, WKAEN hopes to offer courses in Civics, Citizenship, and ESL CTE to better serve the community under the IIF. WKAEN also offers GED in English and in Spanish and offers 10 CTE courses in English and 4 in Spanish. Due to West Kern's rural community, the needs of students remain the same: low high school equivalency attainment, a high unemployment rate, with 56% Hispanic/Latino population and 15% of those are not U.S. Citizens. This data shows that there is a high need for English as a Second Language (ESL). WKAEN will continue to prioritize IIF that will incorporate ESL, Spanish GED, parenting, financial literacy, computer skills, civics, citizenship, and ESL CTE courses. Looking forward to the next three years, WKAEN plans to expand many different areas of opportunity. In 2022 - 2025, WKAEN will complete updates on a building that will serve the Hispanic and Latino community. This new facility is located one block away from Jefferson Elementary, which serves a Hispanic and Latino student population of 80%. Classes such as ESL, civics, citizenship, parenting, financial literacy, computer skills, and ESL CTE will all be housed in this new building.

Address Educational Needs

2022-23 Strategies

Strategy Name

Students Gains

Activity that Applies to this Strategy

Increased Completion Rates

Metrics that Apply to this Activity/Strategy

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

Strategy Description

Collaboration with the Taft Union High School CTE and Taft Community College West Kern Adult Education Network has developed thirteen different short term CTE courses that are recognized by our local industries for employment. WKAEN has hired two onsite counselors. One that assess the students and creates a pathway plan for the students. This counselor also teaches coping skills and soft skills to WIOA I and our struggling students. Our second counselor we hired directly from the community college so that WKAEN students have a personal counselor to guide them into post-secondary education.

WKAEN local industry partners have expressed a strong need for a trained and local workforce. WKAEN is meeting the needs by developing and implementing industry related trainings which enhance learner's job skills and basic education proficiencies. Employers are responding by directly hiring CTE graduates.

Improve Integration of Services & Transitions

2022-23 Strategies

Strategy Name

Supporting accelerated students

Activity that Applies to this Strategy

Increased Completion Rates

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

GED students are offered individualized tutoring supporting their basic skills efforts. In addition, math and writing workshops are offered to our students and other community members who need assistance. In 2022-2023, GED instructors expanded instructional hours to provide one-on-one tutoring for students struggling with subjects. For the 2022-2023 program year, assessments will be implemented for ESL students during enrollment which will result in appropriate placement for successful outcomes. Additionally, WKAEN has prioritized counseling for all students as they progress through their educational pathway. Counseling services are aimed at encouraging students to pursue post-secondary education or career advancement. In collaboration with the Taft Union High School CTE and Taft Community College, West Kern Adult Education Network has developed thirteen different short term CTE courses that are recognized by our local industries for employment. WKAEN has hired two on-site counselors. One that assess the students and creates a pathway plan for the students. This counselor also teaches coping skills and soft skills to WIOA I and our struggling students. Our second counselor, we hired directly from the Community college so that WKAEN students have a personal counselor to guide them into post-secondary education.

WKAEN local industry partners have expressed a strong need for a trained and local workforce. WKAEN is meeting the needs by developing and implementing industry related trainings which enhance learner's job skills and basic education proficiencies. Employers are responding by directly hiring CTE graduates.

Improve Effectiveness of Services**2022-23 Strategies****Strategy Name**

Closing the gap in ESL

Activity that Applies to this Strategy

Increased Completion Rates

Metrics that Apply to this Activity/Strategy

- Student Barriers: English Language Learner (AE 305 - Overall)
- Student Barriers: Low Literacy (AE 311 - Overall)

Strategy Description

After looking at current processes and upcoming goals for the organization, WKAEN sees the next three years as a period of expansion. In 2022-2025, WKAEN hopes to offer courses in Civics, Citizenship, and ESL CTE to better serve the community under the IIF. WKAEN also offers GED in English and in Spanish and offers 10 CTE courses in English and 4 in Spanish. Due to West Kern's rural community, the needs of students remain the same: low high school equivalency attainment, a high unemployment rate, with 56% Hispanic/Latino population and 15% of those are not U.S. Citizens. This data shows that there is a high need for English as a Second Language (ESL). WKAEN will continue to prioritize IIF that will incorporate ESL, Spanish GED, parenting, financial literacy, computer skills, civics, citizenship, and ESL CTE courses. Looking forward to the next three

years, WKAEN plans to expand many different areas of opportunity. In 2022 – 2025, WKAEN will complete updates on a building that will serve the Hispanic and Latino community. This new facility is located one block away from Jefferson Elementary, which serves a Hispanic and Latino student population of 80%. Classes such as ESL, civics, citizenship, parenting, financial literacy, computer skills, and ESL CTE will all be housed in this new building.

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.

West Kern Adult Education Network (WKAEN) is partnered with local resources to ensure the broadest implementation of the plan elements, designing surveys and feedback forms, implementing such tools to advance our organization. WKAEN has implemented elementary and secondary basic skills into our educational classes, including classes required for a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate. GED courses in English and Spanish as well as subject directed tutoring. Programs for immigrants eligible for educational services in civics and citizenship, English as a Second Language (ESL), and workforce preparation, and CTE courses and recognized by local industries. Programs for parents, to develop knowledge and skills to assist elementary and secondary school children to succeed academically. Programs for adults with disabilities, Driver's Education Preparation, and community awareness. Short-term CTE courses (less than 53 hours) are offered in increments of two weeks or less resulting in high enrollment and high employment potential. Offering state certifications for employment for areas in Security Guard, Construction, and education. Developing an onsite Pearson Vue testing center for our students and our community. Leasing a building that is focused on our Hispanic/ Latino population.

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

WKAEN has developed short-term CTE Lab courses which gave our unemployed adults in our community the skills to obtain entry level employment, as well as create pathways into post-secondary education and upper-level Career Technical Education. Investing roll-over funds on initial supplies and curriculum for these courses will ensure that the courses will be sustainable. Professional Development: WKAEN will also invest in the professional development of their instructors and support staff by providing ongoing training opportunities to ensure staff and teachers are educated in best practices and improved student learning outcomes, including instruction on the use of technology. Data, Testing and Assessment: WKAEN found that the data inputs, testing, and assessment areas needed to be improved and expanded. Planning began on developing a more efficient area for testing and increasing the number of trained staff. Module Development: WKAEN is implementing Modules that allows WKAEN to obtain more services and outcomes in our data. WKAEN will be applying for WIOA II funding along with other funding sources to support the needs of our community. WKAEN Expansion Project: We expect 2022/23 unspent allocated funds to be used to acquire and renovate an additional location in the Hispanic/Latino community. Offering ESL, Civics, citizenship, and CTE course. This project will launch the fall of 2023.

Certification

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