

68 West Kern Consortium

CONSORTIUM APPROVED

2024-25

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 of student intakes, assessments, counseling, and placement processes into the myriads 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. Attentively 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, we average between 300 to 350 non-duplicated students are being served. A total of 96 workforce certifications have been handed out since 2017 and WKAEN has had over 118 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 Integrated Immigration Framework (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. From 2024 – 2027, WKAEN will completely be moved into their second site making the school one school site. This site sits in the middle of the Hispanic/ Latino population. WKAEN will be expanding modules for classrooms, testing and administration. 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. This new location is also two blocks away from our Community College for post-Secondary education.

WKAEN has received the WIOA Title I grant since 2019. The Workforce innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA I) grant was awarded for 2024-2025 for 370,582.00. With Budget cuts and funding WKAEN was awarded the upcoming school year, with the expectation to serve 100 students ranging from 18- 24.

WKAEN's Primary Goals:

- By 2025, increase the number of HSE graduates by 33%.
- By 2025, develop at least two accredited programs with state recognized certificates that lead students to gainful employment (Construction and EMT).
- 2024- 2025 WKAEN has received and operating the WIOA II grant WKAEN has hired Civics, Citizenship teacher. WKAEN has purchased Burlington curriculum, incorporate computers to all the students, receive professional development to increase our testing / assessment scores.
- 2024-2025 WKAEN has received the ELL Health grant that's focused on the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) for ELL students that are wanting to advance in the medical field. This will allow student Increase of employment rate by 16% within our local company/industries.
- By 2025 WKAEN will reside in our new location and operate at full capacity.

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 impact 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 transformed 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 to become employed or enrolled in higher education programs which will ultimately provide better financial stability. To accomplish this goal, WKAEN is utilizing a myriad of community collaborations that make it easy for students to identify the next steps and remove barriers to achieving their goals. Internally, WKAEN established protocols that 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 develop curriculum and incorporate dual enrollment. To ensure that the partnership between all involved entities is on track. For WKAEN's WIOA I program, modules have been put in place that allow students to get an easy-to-follow overview of expectations, and 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 training or classes. WKAEN will provide counseling for each student who 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 are available to any student interested in getting more information about their options. Looking ahead, WKAEN recently hired a bilingual counselor that is bilingual that will help our ESL students transition into post-secondary education or CTE. Counselors will be assisting students to gain soft skills and increase employability and stackable certifications.

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 are 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 the 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?

As of 2024-2025 Student intake data shows 51% of our clients reported having more or more barriers. 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 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 enterprise 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 Community College. Further, WKAEN plans to establish monthly advisory committees with Taft Union High School District and Taft Community College to develop curriculum and ensure that the partnership between all involved entities is on track.

Address Educational Needs

2024-25 Strategies

Strategy Name

Student 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 (CTE) (AE 636 - 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 assesses the students and creates a pathway plan for the students. This counselor also teaches coping skills and important skills to WIOA I and our struggling students. Our second counselor is hired directly from the community college so that WKAEN students have a personal counselor to guide them into post-secondary education. WKAEN's 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 training which enhances learners' job skills and basic education proficiencies. Employers are responding by directly hiring WKAEN's CTE graduates. WKAEN has been given the ELL health grant to serve our ESL students going into the medical field for EMT. WKAEN's new class for 2024 -2025 is Construction for our ESL students under our WIOA II grant. Both of these classes are connected to Taft Community College.

Improve Integration of Services & Transitions

2024-25 Strategies

Strategy Name

support Accelerated

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 2024-2025 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 assesses 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 is hired directly from the Community college so that WKAEN students have a personal counselor to guide them into post-secondary education. WKAEN's local industry partners have expressed a strong need for a trained and local workforce. WKAEN is meeting the local industries' needs by developing and implementing industry-related training that enhances learners' job skills and basic education proficiencies. Employers are responding by directly hiring CTE graduates.

Improve Effectiveness of Services

2024-25 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 2023-2024, WKAEN hopes to offer courses in Civics, Citizenship, and ESL CTE to better serve the community under the IIF. WKAEN also offers a GED in English and 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, and a high unemployment rate, with 56% Hispanic/Latino population and 15% of those who 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 which 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 2023 – 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 to aid parents and adults within this community. WKAEN will be fully moved and operating out of this new sight by 2024.

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 Burlington curriculum, AZTEC, and computers to assist with our basic skills in 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, Emergency medical Technician (EMT), 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 that is located in the low economic region.

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

WKAEN has developed short-term CTE Lab courses which gave our unemployed adults in our community the skills to obtain entry level employment, 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. 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. 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. 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. As of 2023 WKAEN has opened our second site to provide space for our WIOA I and ESL programs to operate out of. As of 2024 this second site will expand with three portables, a maintenance building that will sustain our students, and hold students that are currently on the waiting list. As of 2024, this second site will be WKAEN's primary site. This new location will allow WKAEN to serve the 150 students that we currently have on a waiting in ESL.

Certification

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