



FY25 Adult ESOL ACCESS SMALL GRANTS Grant Guidelines and Application Questions

MCAEL strengthens and builds adult English language learning programs and instruction in Montgomery County to further individual and family success at work, school, and in the community. In support of this mission, MCAEL is offering grant support for **adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes in FY25 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025)**, with the generous support of the Montgomery County Government. MCAEL partners with organizations and groups to increase the availability of adult ESOL services that support identified community needs and diverse populations and to improve the quality of these services.

An **Access Small Grant** award is up to \$7,500. Similar to Access Grants, the objectives of Access Small Grants are to:

- Create English learning opportunities for communities that currently lack or have limited access
- Develop trust points to link individuals to the larger ESOL system that exists in the county
- Enable ESOL organizations to access and leverage new/emerging partnerships and resources

Access Small Grants can support:

- Classes that are drop-in (adult learners may join at any time during a session/semester)
- Start-up or recently established adult ESOL classes
- Programs that offer fewer than 120 hours of instructional time per learner per year

Access Small Grants include a technical assistance consultation at the outset of the grant period if needed and program advice/support throughout the year.

(This is one of three types of grants that MCAEL offers; please see the separate grant guidelines for Program and Access Grants at <https://www.mcael.org/grants>.)

MCAEL FY25 Grant Program Focus

MCAEL's overarching goal is to increase the number of learners accessing English learning opportunities, and to provide quality programs that yield results. While adult ESOL programs in the MCAEL coalition have reached increasingly more learners, the numbers decreased during the pandemic years and only in 2023 surpassed pre-pandemic levels. However, according to U.S. Census data, the number of county residents 18 and over who report that they speak English less than "very well" has increased steadily over the same time period -- the latest estimate is 139,000 adults (American Community Survey, 2022). Under our new equity-focused strategic plan for FY2024-26, MCAEL is proactively working to improve access for learners who would most benefit from English classes through continuing and new partnerships, and through its grants program.

MCAEL's work falls under several of the County Executive's priority outcomes, including "An Affordable and Welcoming Community"; see a list of these at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Government/visionStatement.html>. MCAEL's work also links to the County Executive's signature initiative of "Advancing Racial Equity and Social Justice."

In this context, applications that address the following may be considered favorably:

- 1) In-person classes and/or drop-in learning opportunities in areas in which:
 - there are fewer adult ESOL learners accessing classes including, but not limited to: 20874, 20876 (Germantown), 20901, 20903, 20904 (Silver Spring/White Oak/Colesville) [based on the darkest purple areas of the [MCAEL Equity Focus Areas Map](#)]
 - the density of potential adult English learners is high
- 2) Classes for populations that currently lack access to English learning opportunities
- 3) Classes on Saturday or Sunday

Preference will be given to applicants that demonstrate that the program/organization:

- addresses a specific need, and has a clearly defined goal, scope, location, and budget;
- connects learners to the larger adult ESOL network;
- shows that some other resources can be used to support the success of the program (including in-kind support or volunteer time, or partnerships with other organizations.)

- has a demonstrated commitment to continually improving their program; and
- can meet the requirements set out in the Grant Requirements on Page 4 of this document

MCAEL encourages programs to make use of data and reports on the MCAEL, county government, and other websites to consider how their programming might reach more potential learners. MCAEL collects and analyzes demographic data on adult ESOL learners to identify gaps in service; the 2022-2023 interactive data presentation is available to view at: <https://mcael.org/montgomery-county-md>. County data collected through the American Community Survey can be found at <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>.

Who is Eligible to Apply?

- Nonprofit groups that are incorporated in the state of Maryland; 501c3 tax exempt status is not required. (If your organization does not have 501c3 status, we ask that you provide a copy of your Articles of Incorporation as part of the application.)
- FY24 or previous year recipients of grants of \$7,500 or less (including Start-Up grants)

Applicants for an FY25 Program and/or Access grant are not eligible to apply for an Access Small Grant.

While applicants can have offices outside Montgomery County, **beneficiaries of funded services must be either Montgomery County residents or employed in Montgomery County.** An organization may apply for MCAEL funding regardless of whether it has applied for other County-administered grant programs. Applicants who receive funding one year are not guaranteed funding in subsequent years – funding is dependent on many factors including performance in the current and/or previous years.

Use of funds

Access Small Grant funds are to be used for core costs of adult ESOL classes (online or in-person) only:

- Instructor fees
- Program coordination time
- Textbooks/materials
- Rent for classroom space (for in-person classes)
- Zoom licenses (for online classes)

MCAEL grantees must also ensure that ESOL program and curriculum content do not contain language or visuals that advocate for learners to participate in any religious or political activities. While the process of learning English also involves understanding societal customs and norms, ESOL programs funded by MCAEL must not use any content that seeks to influence learners' decisions, behaviors, or action, particularly as it related to religious or political concerns. Grantees should make every effort to create inclusive learning environments that are welcoming to participants of all backgrounds and experiences.

If the budget allows, funding can also be used for the provision of childcare.

Access Small Grant funding cannot be used for:

- Refreshments or food
- Gift cards for volunteers, instructors, or learners

Grant requirements

Each grant recipient is required to sign a Letter of Agreement with MCAEL. Under applicable laws and regulations, certain requirements must be met in order to negotiate an agreement and disburse funds. In the event of non-compliance with one or some of these requirements, the agreement may be terminated or suspended in whole or in part.* Access Small Grant recipients are required to:

- Keep accurate program records, including learner registration information and attendance, as well as accurate records of grant funds expended.
- Attend at least two Topics in Program Administration Meetings, Network Meetings, or Instructor Workshops over the FY25 year.
- Submit a midyear and final report in January and July 2025, respectively.
- Schedule a site visit or virtual check-in if one is requested by MCAEL.
- Acknowledge MCAEL and Montgomery County Government in all publicity and in all promotional or informational materials used in connection with this program.
- Acknowledge MCAEL's authority to withhold and/or recover grant funds in case such funds are not used for the purpose for which the grant was made.

* Please note that the extent to which these requirements are or are not met will also be considered in future grant applications to MCAEL.

Application due date

All completed applications are due by 5:00 pm on Tuesday, April 9, 2024. Late submissions will not be considered.

Application Review Process

MCAEL staff members do not make funding decisions or vote on funding allocations. All funding recommendations will be made by a volunteer Grants Review Panel composed of community members. Panel members are selected to represent a diversity of experience and expertise in one or more of the following: a local community and the community's needs, nonprofit management, adult ESOL or education, and/or government/nonprofit grantmaking.

Each panelist attends an in-depth orientation and reads and evaluates all applications based on the criteria in the Evaluation Criteria (see below). The Grant Panel divides into small groups to interview applicants to clarify questions about individual proposals. (Any additional materials that applicants bring to the interviews will not be considered by the panel.) Finally, the entire Grant Panel convenes to discuss each proposal and recommend funding allocations. For previous grant recipients, grant compliance and program performance will be referred to in the process. The Grant Panel's recommendations are then sent to the MCAEL Board of Directors for final approval.

During the application review process, Grant Panel reviewers will read and evaluate applications according to the Evaluation Criteria listed above. In addition, for ongoing programs reviewers will consider the applicant organization's efforts and flexibility in meeting the needs of its learners in a changing environment, and how lessons learned in the current year (FY24) are taken into account in plans for FY25. They will also take into account returning applicants' fulfillment of grant requirements (attendance of meetings, submission of reports) in the current year. Finally, the Grant Panel will consider distribution of grant funding in a way that is aligned with MCAEL's MCAEL's Strategic Plan(s).

Evaluation criteria

All applications will be reviewed by the Grant Review Panel. Each of these three aspects on the Access Small Grant applications are equally important:

- Objectives and Target Population
- Project Design and Delivery
- Applicant organization/group capacity

Applicants for Access Small Grants may use the online Grants Portal to apply; be sure to select “Access Small Grant” on the online application form so that you complete the correct form. Access Small Grant applications are also available in fillable PDF format; for information, please contact MCAEL at program@mcael.org and put “PDF grant application” in the subject line.

TIMELINE FOR FY25 GRANT CYCLE

Feb 12	Release FY25 Grant Guidelines on website .
Feb 20	Grants Information Session for potential applicants. To register, click here .
March 19,20,21	MCAEL staff available for questions (for first-time applicants, new program staff, access grant applicants). Sign up here .
T April 9, 5:00 pm	Applications due; must be submitted via MCAEL Grants Portal.
April 10 – 12	Staff first review of applications – to note if anything is incomplete.
W May 15 and F May 17 (times TBA)	Applicants will be scheduled for online interviews with members of the MCAEL Grant Review Panel.
May/June	County Council approves County budget. MCAEL Grant Review Panel members review applications.
Early June	Grant Review Panel meets and makes funding recommendations. MCAEL Board reviews and approves funding recommendations. Applicants are notified of the MCAEL Board's final funding decisions. Awards are announced on www.mcael.org .
June-July	Award recipients make any necessary adjustments to program and budget to align with amount awarded, discuss grant requirements with MCAEL staff, and complete Letters of Agreement.*
September	First grant payments distributed.
Early January	Midyear report due.
February	Second grant payments distributed.
Early July	Final report due.

** Funds are not committed to a program until both parties have signed a Letter of Agreement (LOA).*

Please log in to the MCAEL Grants Portal to apply for an Access Small Grant. (Application forms will be accessible by February 23, 2024 at <https://www.mcael.org/grants>). The application requires completion of two online forms: 1) Grant Application Form (with 2 organizational document attachments), and 2) Application Data Summary (with Class Info and Budget attachment). The application questions are below for reference and are subject to change. [Access Small Grant applicants may request a fillable PDF format application, see page 5 above.] Completed applications are due by Tuesday, April 9, 2024 at 5:00 pm. Late submissions will not be considered.

MCAEL FY25 Access Small Grant Application (Online Form #1)

Grant Application Form Questions

Organization/Group's Name:

Are you a new or returning applicant?

Which Grant are you applying for? (Program/Access Grant/Access Small Grant)

Name of Program/Activity:

Funding for: (Class, Drop-in, Conversation club)

Classes will be: (In-person, online, hybrid) (check all that apply)

Amount of Funding Requested: (Must be \$7,500 or less)

If you will offer in-person classes, please note which county service region classes will be held in: check all that apply)

- **Upcounty** (Germantown, Gaithersburg, Clarksburg)
- **Midcounty** (including Wheaton, Aspen Hill, Brookeville, Olney, Kensington, Brookeville, Sandy Spring, Derwood)
- **Eastern Montgomery** (Colesville, Burtonsville, White Oak)
- **Silver Spring** (Silver Spring, Takoma Park)
- **Bethesda-Chevy Chase** (Bethesda, Cabin John, Chevy Chase, Potomac)

[If you aren't clear on what area you are serving, refer to this link:
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Government/rsc.html>.]

Days/Timing of Classes: (M-F Daytime, M-F Eve, Weekends)

Program Contact:

Phone Number (Office):

Format: xxx-xxx-xxxx

Alternate Phone Number:

Format: xxx-xxx-xxxx

Email Address:

Summary: In no more than three sentences, briefly describe purpose of funding request, including program goal/objectives, target population, and area of the county in which classes will be offered. (This may be used for the MCAEL website/materials.)

Maryland Public Information Act

Please note that applications for MCAEL's grants are subject to the Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) (found at Md. Code Ann., State Gov't., §10-611 through - 628 (MPIA)); MCAEL (as a recipient of Montgomery County funding) must comply with the disclosure requirements of the MPIA when a request for documents is received. *Your signature below indicates your understanding of this.*

Agreement

I hereby certify that: (i) I am an authorized representative of the Organization, (ii) the information submitted in the application is true and correct in all respects, (iii) the Organization will abide by all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to any grant that may be issued to the Organization, and (iv) the Organization (and any of the Organization's applicable programs) has the capacity and ability to abide by the Grant Responsibilities outlined in this application should the Organization (or its program(s)) be awarded a grant for FY25. The Organization (through the contact person listed on the Grant Application Cover Sheet) agrees to notify Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy (MCAEL) immediately via email at program@mcael.org or in writing to MCAEL, 9210 Corporate Blvd., Suite 480, Rockville, MD 20850, if there are any material changes at the Organization, the Organization ceases operations or otherwise ceases to exist, or the Organization becomes a subsidiary of or otherwise controlled by another organization. Submitted by an authorizing official of the organization:

Printed Name and Title of authorizing officer of the organization:

Date:

Proposal Narrative

A. Objectives and target population (limit 200 words per question)

1. Describe your organization/group's purpose and objectives for implementing adult English services. How do adult ESOL classes fit in with the other work of your organization?

2. What specific population do the classes aim to assist? Please note what the unmet need is and how it has been determined.

B. Project Design and Delivery (limit 150 words each question)

1. Describe how the class(es) will be implemented, as related to the aspects (based on TESOL Standards areas) listed below:
 - a) Learner Recruitment: How will the learners be located/informed of the class/club?
 - b) Instruction: How will the instructor(s) be located/hired/trained? Will he/she/they be paid or volunteer their time?
 - c) Curriculum and Instructional Materials: How will the curriculum be determined? What instructional materials (textbooks and supplementary materials) will be used?
 - d) Assessing Learner Gains: How will the program (and learners) know that learners' English skills (reading, writing, speaking, or listening) have improved? What will be used to measure (e.g. informal assessment, post-test, or "can do" statements

Two sources that can provide overall guidance for the ideal components in a quality ESOL program include: Standards for Adult Education ESL Programs, published by the TESOL Press, and The Maryland State Program Standards found and The Maryland State Program Standards found [here](#).

C. Organizational/Group Capacity (limit 200 words)

1. What financial and/or organizational resources will be committed that will enable the proposed project to be successful? (Please include in-kind resources, such as classroom space, and partnerships with other organizations.)

2. Please confirm that you have staff or volunteers who will be able to do the following:

- Manage class registration and maintain registration information
- Track attendance
- Track expenses
- Complete reporting for MCAEL (midyear and final reports, due in January and July respectively)

Supporting Organizational Documents

Please upload the following organizational documents in support of your grant application:

1. Organization/group budget for

- 1) a) previous complete fiscal year with budget compared to actuals and
b) current fiscal year

(Please combine into one PDF document for upload.)

2. List of leadership and staff

Application Data Summary (Online Form #2)

This form requests key information on your planned classes and budget for FY25.

Please first download and complete the Class Info and Budget Workbook available at <https://www.mcael.org/grants>, then provide the relevant responses.

Summary – Targets and actuals

1. Number of adult learners enrolled: (# can include duplicates across sessions)*

Current Year Actual (actual through March 31, 2024) [Start-up programs use N/A]

Proposed Target for next year

**# of enrolled is the number of learners reflected on the actual class roster and attended at least one class.*

2. Number of unique individuals enrolled: (unduplicated number)

Current Year Actual (actual through March 31, 2024) [Start-up programs use N/A]

Proposed Target for next year

3. Number of classes offered

Current Year Actual [Start-up programs use N/A]

Proposed Target for next year

Budget Information

Please fill in the following fields based on your *Program Budget*.

1. Total cost of your program (including everything, not just the portion for which you are seeking MCAEL funding)

2. Total value of in-kind contributions

3. Amount requested from MCAEL

4. What is the cost to a learner to attend your classes?

5. If you are asking for an increase in funding over last year, what will this increase be used for? (If this does not apply, use N/A.)

Please upload your Class Info and Budget Workbook here.

File upload – Class Info and Budget



Indicators of Learner Progress: For reference for Outcomes Section

1. Increased ability to use English in daily living situations
<input type="checkbox"/> Use library resources <input type="checkbox"/> Be a better shopper <input type="checkbox"/> Read in English <input type="checkbox"/> Complete a store transaction in English <input type="checkbox"/> Read, write and send an email, letter or text in English <input type="checkbox"/> Speak on the telephone and take a message <input type="checkbox"/> Read and write a street address <input type="checkbox"/> Identify and read street signs <input type="checkbox"/> Give and follow directions <input type="checkbox"/> Read bus/metro schedule (or take public transportation) <input type="checkbox"/> Complete a form (medical, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce oneself <input type="checkbox"/> Request repair services <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate with police <input type="checkbox"/> Read a menu to order food <input type="checkbox"/> Speak to family members in English
2. Improved or sustained health/awareness of health access
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicate basic health information in English <input type="checkbox"/> Make a medical appointment using English <input type="checkbox"/> Read a medicine label <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate using English during an emergency medical situation <input type="checkbox"/> Identify common medications and their uses
3. Improved or maintained economic status:
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicate in English with supervisor, coworkers, customers <input type="checkbox"/> Complete a resume <input type="checkbox"/> Identify career/education options and plan goals in English <input type="checkbox"/> Complete an employment application <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for a job interview <input type="checkbox"/> Increase basic computer skills <input type="checkbox"/> Read employment documents (contracts, paystubs, safety rules, etc.)
4. Improved communication with child's school/improved support for child's education:
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicate with teacher without a translator <input type="checkbox"/> Read child's report card <input type="checkbox"/> Practice English with children or grandchildren <input type="checkbox"/> Write an excuse note for child
5. Improved community connectedness
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicate in English with neighbors (all levels) <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in community events (e.g. festivals, housing community meetings) <input type="checkbox"/> Enroll in English citizenship class