



FY25 Adult ESOL PROGRAM 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.

A **Program Grant** award is for over \$20,000. Program Grants are to maintain, expand, and improve structured, multi-level ESOL programs with managed enrollment. This includes supplementary services that enable more learners to attend ESOL classes, such as childcare and transportation support. Grant funding can also be used to strengthen the program management and organizational capacity of the organization to deliver adult ESOL services.

Applicants for Program Grants must:

- Offer at least 120 hours of instructional time a year per learner (e.g. 3 hrs/wk. for 40 weeks)
- Have an established infrastructure (staff and standard ESOL program components in place, including assessment measures)
- Be able to show a solid track record of demonstrating the ability to successfully carry out the program
- Have managed enrollment for its classes (registration dates with session start/end dates – not drop-in)

(This is one of three types of grants that MCAEL offers; please see the separate grant guidelines for Access and Access Small 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 County for a Lifetime"; 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 specific populations that currently lack or have limited access to English learning opportunities;
- 3) Classes on Saturday or Sunday

Generally, preference will be given to applicants that demonstrate that the program/organization:

- provides English instruction that is of high benefit to learners (practically rather than theoretically);
- connects learners to the larger adult ESOL network;
- are addressing a specific need, and have a clearly defined goal, scope, location, and budget;

- maximizes the use of outside funds, other support services, and partnerships;
- has a demonstrated commitment to continually improving their program; and
- can meet the responsibilities set out in the Responsibilities of Grant Recipients on Page 4 of these guidelines.

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?

Applicants must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization or have a partnership that includes a nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) status. Organizations must be incorporated under state law. 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

Program grant funds can be used for all direct costs of implementing the program (including instructor time, classroom rental, textbooks, instructional materials, supplies, staff time managing the program, etc.) as well as some indirect costs. To enable more learners to attend classes, grant funding can also be used to cover the cost of childcare offered during instruction, as well as transportation assistance. MCAEL funds may also be used for instructor time devoted to professional development (in-house orientation/training or external training) and for other purposes related to program improvement (for example, curriculum review).

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.

MCAEL grant funding cannot be used for:

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

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROGRAM GRANT RECIPIENTS

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.* These requirements include the following:

- Maintain tax-exempt 501(c) (3) status with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service throughout the grant period -- if partnering with a 501(c)(3) organization, that organization must maintain its tax-exempt status;
- Comply with applicable affirmative action and equal opportunity laws (i.e., Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964);
- Comply with state and federal government audit requirements;**
- Show that the organization or partner organization has insurance to cover the activities proposed and to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, codes, and regulations; **
- Keep FY25 program information updated in the Class Directory on the MCAEL website; provide updated class information to MCAEL as needed for the class list that is on the MCAEL website and distributed widely in the county;
- Maintain appropriate & accurate program records, including enrollment, attendance, pre/post tests, and class schedules, as well as accurate records of grant funds expended;
- Submit an interim and final narrative report that includes student and program outcome data (demographic, class, and indicators) in January and July 2025, respectively, and other grant documents required by MCAEL in a timely manner;
- Attend at least five MCAEL Topics in Program Administration or Network Meetings and have at least one instructor from the program attend at least two MCAEL Instructor Workshops over the FY25 year;

- Participate in the MCAEL Outcomes Project (provide data on learner and program outcomes) and the Continuous Improvement Project (utilize the TESOL standards self-assessment on chosen areas of program improvement to establish a baseline and show progress);
- Schedule a site visit 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; and
- 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 responsibilities are or are not met will also be considered in future grant applications to MCAEL.*

*** Costs such as insurance and the costs related to an audit are considered allowable program expenses.*

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. The MCAEL board receives those recommendations for approval. 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. 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 Strategic Plan(s).

FY25 EVALUATION CRITERIA
For Adult ESOL Program Grant Applications

The Grant Review Panel will review and score each application using the evaluation criteria below, for a possible total of 100 points.

Organizational mission and program objectives (20 pts)

- Clear connection between organizational mission and the adult ESOL program being provided/proposed
- Experience and success in providing adult ESOL services and/or serving particular target population (including achieving previous goals and learner outcomes)
- Clear identification of needs/challenges of the target population for learning English
- Clearly identified program objectives

Program Design and Delivery (30 pts)

- Clear explanation of how program will improve/adapt services based on lessons learned, and thoughtfulness in approach to meeting learners' needs in a changing environment.
- An effectively designed program with clear implementation plan to accomplish program objectives
- Understanding of potential barriers to implementation and a plan to address them

Program Outcomes and Evaluation (25 pts)

- Clear identification of measurable expected outcomes of the program
- Clear identification of measurable expected outcomes for learners' improved English skills (Refer to attachment -- Indicators of Learner Progress)

Organizational Capacity & Sustainability/Program Budget & Financial Accountability (25 pts)

- Organization shows competence and personnel with knowledge, skills, and ability to implement program, including effective use of volunteers and/or partnerships with other organizations
- Organization has designed a program with sustainability in mind in relation to processes, policies, funding, and staff
- Program budget with reasonable and realistic costs, that are clearly explained
- Positive cost/benefit ratio, i.e., significant benefits at a reasonable cost
- Clear and complete information on organizational finances

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 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 3 organizational document attachments), and 2) Application Data Summary (with the Data and Budget Workbook attachment). The application questions are below for reference. Completed applications are due by Tuesday, April 9, 2024 at 5:00 pm. Late submissions will not be considered.

MCAEL FY25 Program Grant Application Form (Online Form #1)

Grant Application Form Questions

Organization's Legal Name:

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

Name of Program/Activity:

Funding for: (Existing Program, Program Expansion, New Program)

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

Amount of Funding Requested:

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:

Application Narrative

A. Organizational mission and program objectives (each question 200 words max)

1. Briefly introduce the organization. Describe the organization's mission, goals, programs, services, and history. How do adult ESOL classes fit in with the other work of your organization?

2. What demonstrated experience and success does the organization have providing adult English services? (e.g. What past programming has the organization offered, to serve what community?) Why is the organization uniquely situated to serve this community, and how has the program made a difference? *please note information particular to the specific population the program serves (e.g. Silver Spring data and/or Spanish speakers etc.)*

3. What specific population does the program aim to serve? What are the particular needs and challenges of this population in learning English? When possible, use quantitative data to justify need. *(This should be particular to the specific population the program serves, for example as related to the 20906 zip code, or Spanish speakers.)*

4. What are the objectives of the English program with regard to this population?

B. Program Design and Delivery

1. Provide details on how the program will be implemented, as related to the program aspects (TESOL Standards areas) listed below. Bullet points are encouraged. (each 150 words max)

a) Overall Program Structure, Administration and Planning (including what level classes will be offered; class sites; supervisory staff structure; whether classes will be in-person, online, or hybrid)

b) Pedagogical Approach, Curriculum, and Instructional Materials: (including how curriculum is set, course content, textbooks/materials to be used, etc.)

c) Instruction: (including types of in-class activities; any outside the classroom activities?)

d) Learner Recruitment, Intake, and Orientation (including strategies for outreach and recruitment, intake and placement, orientation, etc.)

e) Learner Retention and Transition (strategies for retaining learners in the program and assisting them to transition to other programs)

f) Assessment of Learner Gains (plans to measure learner gains according to both course objectives and learners' own goals)

g) Professional Development and Staff/Instructor Evaluation (include minimum requirements for instructors)

h) Support Services (such as referrals for non-ESOL services, childcare support, etc)

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 (available for review at the MCAEL office), and The Maryland State Program Standards found [here](#).

C. Program Outcomes and Evaluation (each question 150 words max)

1. What are your priority program outcomes (top 2-3)? Please identify explicit program measures (indicators) for evaluating the success of your program. One outcome may have more than one indicator. Examples of indicators: a) "at least x% of x# of learners will persist (attend 70% of classes during a session)", or b) a growth of x% in enrollment (general or of learners from a particular population).

2. What are the anticipated measurable outcomes for learners' improved skills? In what ways do you expect improved English skills achieved through participation in your program to affect the lives of your learners? Examples: a) "x% out of x number of learners will be able to communicate better with their doctor, get a library card, write a note/talk to their child's teacher, as self-reported through exit interviews"; b) "x% of x number of students will progress to another level -- we use y assessment to measure progress in pre and post tests."

D. Organizational Capacity/Sustainability (each question: 150 words)

1. Describe the leadership and staffing of this program, including a brief description of years of service and expertise.

2. Describe the organization's plan for the program's sustainability -- what resources, both financial and nonfinancial (including volunteers and partnerships with other organizations), are in place or will the organization seek?

Supporting Organizational Documents

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

1. Organization's Statement of Financial Activities (Income Statement) detailing revenue and expenses for:

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

(Please combine into one PDF document for upload.)

2. Organization's reviewed or audited financial statement for last completed fiscal year, as applicable. If you exceed the audit threshold for charitable contributions (\$750,000) but are not required to have one, please provide proof of your exemption from the State.

3. List of current Board of Directors, including organizational affiliation for each member.

Application Data Summary (Online Form #2)

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

Please first download and complete each of the 5 tabbed worksheets (Outcomes Summary, FY24 Class Summary, FY25 Class Summary, Program Budget, Program Revenues) of the Data and Budget Workbook available at <https://www.mcael.org/grants>. Then provide the relevant responses in the Data Summary; please double check that your figures match those in the worksheets.

Summary – Targets and actuals

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

Current Year Actual (actual through March 31, 2024)

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)

Proposed Target for next year

3. Number of classes offered

Current Year Actual

Proposed Target for next year

Budget Inform

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. Do you intend to provide childcare services?

5. Do you intend to provide transportation assistance? If yes, please indicate what sort of assistance.

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

7. 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 completed Data and Budget Workbook here.

File upload -- Data and Budget Workbook



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 |