Grant Guidelines and Applications

You will find the guidelines for the Program, Access, and Pathway (formerly Access Small) Grants below. Please use the table of contents located below to navigate to the appropriate sections. You can return to the table of contents at any time by clicking the link in the footer of each page.

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ADULT ESOL GRANTS

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 **FY27 (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027)**, 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.

GRANT FOCUS

MCAEL's overarching goal is to increase the number of learners accessing English learning opportunities, and to support quality programs that yield results. While adult ESOL programs in the MCAEL coalition have reached increasingly more learners, 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 according to U.S. Census data. The latest estimate is 143,000 adults (American Community Survey, 2023). Under our 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, online, or hybrid classes that serve learners in areas in which:
    o there are fewer adult ESOL learners accessing classes including, but not limited to: 20874, 20876 (Germantown); Veirs Mill Corridor (between Rockville and Wheaton); 20901, 20903, 20904, 20906 (Silver Spring/White Oak/Colesville);
    o the density of potential adult English learners is high (based on the darkest purple areas of the MCAEL Equity Focus Areas Map);
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:

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- provides English instruction that is of high practical benefit to learners;
- connects learners to the larger adult ESOL network;
- addresses a specific need, and have a clearly defined goal, scope, location, and budget;
- maximizes the use of outside funds, other support services, and partnerships;
- demonstrates a commitment to continually improving their program; and
- meets the responsibilities set out in the Responsibilities of Grant Recipients

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 latest interactive data presentation is available to view at: Adult English Learning in Montgomery County, 2024-25. County data collected through the American Community Survey can be found at https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF GRANT RECIPIENTS

Each grant recipient is required to sign a Letter of Agreement with MCAEL. Grant recipients must meet certain requirements during the grant period.* 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 (there is an exception for non-501(c) (3) Pathway Grant applicants);
- 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 as needed and to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, codes, and regulations; **
- Keep program information updated in the Program 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, assessments, and class schedules, as well as accurate records of grant funds expended;
- Submit mid-year and final narrative reports that include student and program outcome data (demographic, class, and indicators) in January and July 2026, respectively, and other grant documents required by MCAEL in a timely manner;
- 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.

- Meeting and Workshop Requirements
  - Program Grants:
    - Attend at least **5** Program Administration or Network Meetings
    - Ensure at least **1** instructor attends **2** MCAEL Instructor Workshops
  - Access Grants

- Attend at least **2** Program Administration Meetings
- Ensure at least **1** instructor attends **2** MCAEL Instructor Workshops
  o Pathway Grants:
  - Attend at least **1** Program Administration Meeting
  - Ensure at least **1** instructor attends **1** MCAEL Instructor Workshop

* 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 can be considered allowable program expenses.

Application Review Process

All completed applications are due by <u>5:00 pm on Thursday, April 9, 2026</u>. Late submissions will not be considered.

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. 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 returning programs, reviewers will consider the applicant's efforts and flexibility in meeting the needs of its learners in a changing environment, and how lessons learned in the current year (FY26) are taken into account in plans for FY27. 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.

TIMELINE FOR GRANT CYCLE

Feb 12	Release Grant Guidelines on website.
Feb 19	Grants Information Session for potential applicants. To register, click here.
March 18, 19, 20	MCAEL staff available for questions (for first-time applicants, new program staff, access grant applicants). Sign up here.
April 9 (Th), 5:00 pm	Applications due; must be submitted via MCAEL Grants Portal.
May 13 (W) and May 15 (F) (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).

Indicators of Learner Progress: For reference for the Outcomes Section

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

Adult ESOL PROGRAM GRANTS

A **Program Grant** award is for over $23,000. 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 successfully carrying out the program
- Have managed enrollment for its classes (registration dates with session start/end dates – not drop-in)

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 (e.g. office rent, utilities, audit cost). To enable more learners to attend classes, grant funding can also be used to cover the cost of childcare offered during instruction (to enable parents to take classes), 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 grant partners should make every effort to create inclusive learning environments that are welcoming to participants of all backgrounds and experiences. While the process of learning English also involves understanding societal customs and norms, ESOL programs funded by MCAEL must not use any content (text or visuals) during class that seeks to influence learners' decisions, behaviors, or actions, related to religious or partisan political concerns.

MCAEL grant funding cannot be used for:

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

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 a 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)
- An effectively designed program with clear implementation plan to accomplish program objectives
- 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.

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
- Clear and complete information on organizational finances

Please note that the program budget also will be reviewed by the grants panelists for reasonable and realistic costs, and clear explanation.

Please log in to the MCAEL Grants Portal to apply for a Program Grant. (Application forms will be accessible by February 24, 2026 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 Thursday, April 9, 2026, at 5:00 pm. Late submissions will not be considered.

MCAEL Program Grant Application Form (Online Form #1)

Grant Application Form Questions

Are you a new or returning applicant?

Which Grant are you applying for? (Program/Access Grant/ Pathway 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 or hybrid classes, please note which county service region classes will be held in: (check all that apply)

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

[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):

Alternate Phone Number:

Email Address:

Summary: In no more than three sentences, briefly describe the purpose of the 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 within the Maryland Annotated Code., State Gov't. Article, §10-611 through 10-628 (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 the next fiscal year. 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 in 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 barriers for this population in learning English? When possible, use quantitative data to justify the 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

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 by request, and The Maryland State Program Standards found here).

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.)

2. What changes did you make this year in the structure or implementation of your program? How did these changes impact the performance of your program? (limit 150 words for each question)

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. A statement of your organization's budget v. actuals for the previous and current fiscal years.

(Please combine into one PDF document for upload.)

2. Organization's reviewed or audited financial statements for the last completed fiscal year, as applicable. If you exceed the audit threshold ($750,000) or review threshold ($300,000) for charitable contributions 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 the coming year.

Please first download and complete each of the 5 tabbed worksheets (FY27 Targets, FY26 Class Summary, FY27 Class Summary, Budget, Revenue) of the Data and Budget Workbook available at the bottom of this page: 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:

This is the total number of learners reflected on the actual class roster and attended at least one class. It can include duplicates across sessions.

Current Year Actual (actual through March 31 of this year) [new applicants can use N/A]

Proposed Target for next year

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

Current Year Actual (actual through March 31 of this year) [new applicants can use N/A]

3. Number of classes offered

Current Year Actual (actual through March 31 of this year) [new applicants can use N/A]

Proposed Target for next year

Budget Inform

Please fill in the following fields based on your *budget*. **The information should match your budget information.**

1. Total cost of your program. Please include all costs, including general operating, even if you are not requesting MCAEL funding for these expenses.

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

Adult ESOL ACCESS GRANTS

An **Access Grant** award is more than $7,500 and up to $23,000. The objectives of Access Grants are to:
- Provide English learning opportunities for communities that currently lack 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 Grants can support:
- Classes that are drop-in (adult learners may join at any time during a session/semester) or have rolling enrollment (learners can join the class at any time in the session)
- Programs that offer fewer than 120 hours of instructional time per learner per year

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 (see budget instructions for more details). 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 grant partners should make every effort to create inclusive learning environments that are welcoming to participants of all backgrounds and experiences. While the process of learning English also involves understanding societal customs and norms, ESOL

programs funded by MCAEL must not use any content (text or visuals) during class that seeks to influence learners' decisions, behaviors, or actions, related to religious or partisan political concerns.

MCAEL grant funding cannot be used for:

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

EVALUATION CRITERIA

For Adult ESOL ACCESS Grant Applications

Each proposal will be reviewed and scored by the Grant Review Panel using this Evaluation Guide as general guidance.

Objectives and target population (20 pts)
- Logical connection between the organization's mission and the adult ESOL class/es
- Understanding of specific needs/challenges of the population in relation to English

Program Design and Delivery (30 pts)
- Clear plan for implementation – recruitment of learners, instruction, curriculum, assessment of learner gains and other supports.
- For returning programs, a clear explanation of how the program has improved and/or adapted services based on lessons learned, and thoughtfulness of approach to meeting learners' needs in a changing environment.

Outcomes/Benefit (25 pts)
- Plan for measuring program success
- Clear identification of ways learners will be connected to the larger ESOL system - i.e., links individuals to the larger ESOL system that exists in the County

Organizational Capacity/Budget & Financial Accountability (25 pts)
- Demonstrates commitment to some outside funding or in-kind support for the ESOL program
- Identifies appropriate organizational resources for the ESOL program
- Shows commitment of sufficient human resources for the ESOL program
- Clear and complete information on organizational finances

Please note that the program budget also will be reviewed by the grants panelists for reasonable and realistic costs, and clear explanation.

Please log in to the MCAEL Grants Portal to apply for an Access Grant. (Application forms will be accessible by February 24, 2026 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 Data and Budget Workbook attachment). The application questions are below for reference. Completed applications are due by Thursday, April 9, 2026, at 5:00 pm. Late submissions will not be considered.

MCAEL Access Grant Application Form (Online Form #1)

Grant Application Form Questions

Are you a new or returning applicant?

Which Grant are you applying for? (Program/Access/Pathway 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: (more than $7,500 and up to $23,000)

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

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

[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):

Alternate Phone Number:

Email Address:

Summary: In no more than three sentences, briefly describe the purpose of the 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 within the Maryland Annotated Code., State Gov't. Article, §10-611 through 10-628 (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 the next fiscal year. 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. 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, and what barriers to learning English might exist? Please note what the unmet need is and how it has been determined.

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

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 library), and The Maryland State Program Standards found at: https://labor.maryland.gov/adultliteracy/cs.shtml

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)? (For a list of possible indicators, please refer to the Indicators of Learner Progress attachment in the Grants Guidelines.)

e) Support Services: What other support services for learners are planned, including those that may make your classes more family-friendly?

2. What changes did you make this year in the structure or implementation of your program? How did these changes impact the performance of your program? (limit 150 words for each question)

C. Outcomes/Benefit (limit 150 words each question)

1. How will you measure the success of your program this year, as separate from the gains that learners make? (For example, increase learner retention rate, increase enrollment numbers, transition smoothly to a new curriculum, transition to all in-person classes, etc.)

2. How will your organization assist learners to continue their education and connect with other English learning opportunities?

D. Organizational Capacity (limit 200 words)

1. What financial resources have been committed that will enable the proposed project to be successful?

2. What organizational resources will be committed to this proposed project? (Please include in-kind resources, such as classroom space, and partnerships with other organizations.)

3. What human resources will be committed to this proposed project? (Please include what staff/volunteers will be available to manage program registration, track attendance, do reporting, be in the classroom, etc.)

Supporting Organizational Documents

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

1. A statement of your organization's budget v. actuals for the previous and current fiscal years

(Please combine into one PDF document for upload.)

2. Organization's reviewed or audited financial statements for the last completed fiscal year, as applicable. If you exceed the audit threshold ($750,000) or review threshold ($300,000) for charitable contributions 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 the coming year.

Please first download and complete each of the 5 tabbed worksheets (FY27 Targets, FY26 Class Summary, FY27 Class Summary, Budget, Revenue) of the Data and Budget Workbook available at the bottom of this page: 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)*

This is the total number of learners reflected on the actual class roster and attended at least one class. It can include duplicates across sessions.

Current Year Actual (actual through March 31 of this year) [new applicants can use N/A]

Proposed Target for next year

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

Current Year Actual (actual through March 31 of this year) [new applicants can use N/A]

3. Number of classes offered

Current Year Actual (actual through March 31 of this year) [new applicants can use N/A]

Proposed Target for next year

Budget Information

Please fill in the following fields based on your *budget*. **The information should match your budget information.**

1. Total cost of your program. Please include all costs, including general operating, even if you are not requesting MCAEL funding for these expenses.

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

Adult ESOL PATHWAY GRANTS

A **Pathway 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

Pathway 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

Pathway Grants include program development assistance during the grant period (MCAEL will match the program with an experienced program manager to provide up to 10 hours of advice), and program advice/support throughout the year.

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.)

- Program and/or Access grant applicants cannot apply for a Pathway 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

Pathway 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 grant partners should make every effort to create inclusive learning environments that are welcoming to participants of all backgrounds and experiences. While the process of learning English also involves understanding societal customs and norms, ESOL programs funded by MCAEL must not use any content (text or visuals) during class that seeks to influence learners' decisions, behaviors, or actions, related to religious or partisan political concerns.

MCAEL grant funding cannot be used for:
- Refreshments or food
- Gift cards or gifts for volunteers, instructors, or learners

EVALUATION CRITERIA

For Pathway Grant Applications
Each proposal will be reviewed and scored by the Grant Review Panel using this Evaluation Guide as general guidance.

Objectives and target population (20 pts)

- Logical connection between the organization's mission and the adult English literacy activity
- Clarity on target population and its needs; provides evidence of need

Program Design and Delivery (20 pts)

- Clear plan for implementation
  a) Learner Recruitment
  b) Instruction
  c) Curriculum and Instructional Materials
  d) Assessing Learner Gains
- For returning programs, a clear explanation of how the program has improved and/or adapted services based on lessons learned

Organizational/Group Capacity/Budget & Financial Accountability (20 pts)

- Demonstrates commitment to organizational resources for ESOL program (including in-kind resources)
- Confirmation that has staff/volunteers to do listed tasks
- Clear and complete information on organizational finances

Please note that the program budget also will be reviewed by the grants panelists for reasonable and realistic costs, and clear explanation.

Please log in to the MCAEL Grants Portal to apply for an Access Small Grant. (Application forms will be accessible by February 24, 2026 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. Completed applications are due by Thursday, April 9, 2026, at 5:00 pm. Late submissions will not be considered.

MCAEL Pathway Grant Application Form (Online Form #1)

Grant Application Form Questions

Are you a new or returning applicant?

Which Grant are you applying for? (Program/Access Grant/Pathway 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 or hybrid classes, please note which county service region classes will be held in: (check all that apply)

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

[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:

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Phone Number (Office):

Alternate Phone Number:

Email Address:

Summary: In no more than three sentences, briefly describe the purpose of the 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 within the Maryland Annotated Code., State Gov't. Article, §10-611 through 10-628 (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 the next fiscal year. 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. 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)

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 library), and The Maryland State Program Standards found at: https://labor.maryland.gov/adultliteracy/cs.shtml

1. Describe how the class(es) will be implemented, as related to the aspects (based on TESOL Standards areas) listed below.

If you need assistance with any aspect of building your program, this will not affect your chance of getting approved for a Pathway Grant; MCAEL will be a resource for you to help build and strengthen your program.

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? (For a list of possible indicators, please refer to the Indicators of Learner Progress attachment in the Grants Guidelines.)

2. What changes did you make this year in the structure or implementation of your program? How did these changes impact the performance of your program? (limit 150 words for each question)

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 provide a description of the 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. A statement of your organization's budget v. actuals for the previous and current fiscal years

(Please combine into one PDF document for upload.)

2. List of leadership and staff

Application Data Summary (Online Form #2)

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Current Year Actual (actual through March 31 of this year) [new applicants can use N/A]

Proposed Target for next year

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Current Year Actual (actual through March 31 of this year) [new applicants can use N/A]

3. Number of classes offered

Current Year Actual (actual through March 31 of this year) [new applicants can use N/A]

Proposed Target for next year

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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