



# MCAEL ANNUAL REPORT TO MONTGOMERY COUNTY

## Scope of Services

MCAEL is contracted by Montgomery County to be the convener and coordinator for adult English services in the county. The contract is administered by the Montgomery County Public Library department. MCAEL must promote English Literacy, leverage private and public monies for Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services, and assist ESOL providers in building their capacity to increase the quality and quantity of ESOL services they provide.

MCAEL continues to provide capacity building and public education and engagement regarding the need for and benefits from adult English classes (ESOL) for our neighbors. MCAEL’s 2018-2021 Strategic Plan calls for increasing the number of adults the coalition serves annually from about 15,000 a year to 21,000 per year through increased outreach, new access points for adult learners, and we continue to align our programs to meet the needs of adult learners and county priorities.

Throughout FY21, MCAEL undertook the following activities in line with the general purpose of the funding and the specific Scope of Services identified in Section II of the contract, with the following results:

### 1. Maintain a database of ESOL providers, teachers, advocates and advocacy groups that serve the residents in Montgomery County or could be of benefit to ESL providers that serve Montgomery County residents.

MCAEL maintains a broad database of people, groups and partners in the Montgomery County ESOL world. This includes, but is not limited to donors, allies, advocates, instructors, provider staff, elected officials, business, and community leaders.

MCAEL maintains segmented communication lists to provide both general information to the network and our partners, as well as targeted information for both staff and instructors at ESOL organizations:

Salesforce Customer Relationship Data Summary		
	FY20	FY21
Providers	284	293
Instructors	868	1007
Community	1656	1824
<b>Total:</b>	2,808	<b>3,124</b>

### 2. Provide notice of funding and grants opportunities, national and state policy issues, best practices and professional development by e-mail alerts to County ESOL providers. The contractor must provide at least one such notice per week.

MCAEL continues to use a variety of tools (e-newsletters, e-blasts, social media, targeted emails) to maintain ongoing communications with county ESOL programs as well as other partners and community members. We provide information on funding opportunities, professional development, as well as local, regional and national issues that are related to the work of the coalition.

- Our newsletter subscribers total **3,124** (receiving communications from MCAEL at least monthly.)

- MCAEL serves as a communication hub by utilizing Facebook, Twitter and our website (including a new blog as of 2019) to disseminate information & connect community members.
- MCAEL circulated a total of 48 newsletters of which 29 were sent to Instructors/Providers and 19 to the MCAEL Network (July 2020-June 2021). Additional social media and website postings shared information, current events, coalition news and events several times per week.

### 3. Administer grants to providers of adult English literacy services, with the purpose of supporting existing activities, expanding activities, and improving the capacity of providers to deliver high-quality services.

- For FY21, MCAEL awarded \$ 1,285,000 in grant funding with funds provided by Montgomery County. The funding supported 30 adult English literacy programs administered by 22 organizations.
- Grant funding allowed adult ESOL programs to:
  - Enroll 6,902 learners over the entire fiscal year
  - Serve 4,160 unique learners
  - Offer 577 classes, 571 of which were held online.

FY21 was an unusual year with in-person classes still not possible due to the pandemic. For the most part, grant partners were able to effectively provide classes online via Zoom, Facebook, and Google Meet, putting to good use lessons learned providing virtual classes the previous spring. Some observations and notes about this year:

- Overall, in FY21 MCAEL grant partners were able to serve 91.1% of the number of duplicated learners and 89.8% of unique learners they planned to and held 90% of the number of planned classes.
- Program Grant partners reported that 2,157 learners passed the classes they attended, out of a total of 3,572 enrolled, or 60%. (These are managed enrollment classes where learners are expected to attend all class meetings.)
- Overall, grant partners reported that they raised/spent over \$1,769,000 in non-MCAEL funding and used \$501,882 in in-kind contributions for their FY21 classes. This again shows that the County funding is a catalyst to support other fundraising that the ESOL programs leverage.

In addition to its grants program, MCAEL offers instructor workshops, provider meetings, technical assistance and ongoing information exchange, and other resources that non-grantee organizations and their staffs take advantage of. Thus, the total reach of the coalition is between 15,000-20,000 learners engaged by the coalition network through MCAEL supports and services.

#### Grants Management:

- Interacted with grant partners throughout the year via individual meetings and calls, orientation for new grant partners, and new fiscal year kick-off meeting, and received Mid-Year and Final reports to track data and outcomes.
- Managed the FY22 grant application process; this year 12 community members served as grant panel members. As with the previous year, we successfully conducted the entire process online using Zoom – including the grant panel orientation, grant applicant interviews, and grant panel deliberations.

## Capacity/Quality FY21

- As in previous years, MCAEL grant partners were required to select 1-3 TESOL standard areas as continuous improvement goals; see attachment for information which standards were selected and some examples of program improvements.
- Technical assistance was provided to one new FY21 grant partner, Islamic Center of Maryland (ICM); MCAEL contracted with the program manager of another Access grant partner to help assess and develop a plan for establishing adult ESOL classes for the Islamic Center of Maryland using TESOL Standards for adult education programs. Strategies for marketing the program, staffing, curriculum and placement tests, documentation, and reporting were some of the areas discussed. As a result, ICM successfully offered seven classes in FY21.
- Connected Kings and Priests Court International Ministries (KPCIM) with another church-based ESOL program to discuss what is needed to run an ESOL program, in advance of provision of more specific technical assistance to KPCIM, which is interested in developing its own ESOL classes. MCAEL also worked with KPCIM to pilot the Community Learning Group model described below.
- MCAEL invested in converting the Program Administrator Toolkit (published in 2019), to an online version, launched in May 2021. The online version is more easily and widely accessible and will be updated on a quarterly basis. It features all the original content of the original publication, with an added section on distance learning, which captures and distills many of the lessons learned over the last year of online instruction during the pandemic. Access to the Toolkit is free of charge for Montgomery County organizations, or \$20 (forever access) for those outside the county. It can be found at: <https://toolkit.mcael.org/about-toolkit>.
- In FY21 MCAEL contracted an instructional designer to develop the online “Foundations in Adult ESOL Instruction” course, which updated and has replaced MCAEL’s signature in-person “More Learning, Less Teaching” training course. The course piloted in April 2021 and launched in May. Each of the five modules includes videos, short exercises and discussion questions, including a chance to design a lesson plan and have it reviewed. The course takes approximately 10 hours to complete at an individual’s own pace over three weeks. Offered free-of-charge every other month, the course kicks off and ends with a synchronous meeting; here is a brief description of the course: <https://www.powtoon.com/c/cSgSMQZ2Hmh/1/m>.
  - As of June 30, 2021, 37 instructors have taken the course. Feedback from post-course surveys has been very positive. In addition, the “distance learning” module was utilized for the training of the Community Learning Group instructors in May/June (see more about this below).

## 4. Conduct an Outcomes Project that measures the quality and effectiveness of ESL service delivery. Grantees/Providers receiving funds from MCAEL must submit demographic and performance data to MCAEL as a condition of their funding. MCAEL must ensure that Grantees/Providers comply with the established reporting requirements and all reporting deadlines.

- There are many levels of data (output and outcome) that MCAEL collects and reports on – at the learner, instructor and program level. MCAEL requests detailed learner and program improvement data from MCAEL-funded programs. All new programs are given orientation regarding data requirements. MCAEL provides output data (number of learners served) and

outcomes data (what did those learners accomplish), as well as program improvement information that shows how grant partners are improving their programs in specific areas year-to-year. (See attachment.)

- In addition, for its new Community Learning Groups initiative, MCAEL is developing a database for learner, instructor, and class information to be able to efficiently report on program and learner outcomes.
- We engaged two graduate students from the University of Maryland School of Information to clean FY20 data and create visualizations of learner and class data, which were used to inform programming and include in the FY20 data presentation.
- MCAEL began a new partnership with Montgomery Planning to revamp and update its StoryMap presentation which provides maps and analysis of learner demographic and class data from MCAEL grant partners and other larger nonprofit adult ESOL classes, as related to the latest available Census data on the Limited English Proficient population. The FY20 data presentation can be found here: <https://mcael.org/montgomery-county-md>.

**5. Offer 10 meetings per year for the 60 active ESL providers (non-profit and for-profit, large and small, secular and faith-based) already in the Coalition and others as they are identified. These meetings are required for grantees/providers receiving funds from MCAEL. Meetings will offer all MCAEL grantees/providers the opportunity to share information; work collectively on issues facing the teaching and funding of ESL; leverage their combined resources for increased funding and more effective delivery of ESL services, as well as better purchasing power. (see attachment with summary chart of offerings)**

MCAEL provides a robust schedule of opportunities for detailed ESOL professional development and discussion of emerging topics, as well as informational “Network Meetings” on relevant resources in the county, for program staff and instructors. In FY21, we hosted four Topics in Program Administration meetings that focused on TESOL standard areas for program staff; these meetings are structured as a peer learning opportunity and provide program staff the opportunity to share best practices related to specific topics.

- Two informational Network Meetings were held, to which all coalition program staff and instructors were invited; these were seen as even more valuable this year, at a time when learners’ needs increased due to the pandemic.

As for instructor workshops, due to the current online environment, tools to engage learners online was the number one topic requested from instructors.

- Of the eight workshops MCAEL offered in FY21, several workshops focused on this, in addition to other topics of interest as identified on an instructor survey which included professional development needs and preferences. (See attachments section for a list of meeting and workshop topics.) Attendance at these meetings totaled 287 individuals from 44 organizations.

In addition, in February 2021 MCAEL held its first informal “brown bag” meeting for Access grant partners, to provide a chance for program managers of drop-in and smaller programs to share common concerns. The first meeting was felt to be very useful by participants, and at our grant partners’ request, these were held again in April and June, and is now a bi-monthly series that MCAEL will continue into the next fiscal year.

MCAEL relies on the input and feedback of coalition partners, particularly the MCAEL Advisory Group, to ensure that we offer the most timely and relevant programming for the program administrator and instructor network.

In FY21, MCAEL staff worked with a pro bono consultant to provide input on how to improve the MCAEL Advisory Group's efficiency and effectiveness. As a result, the advisory group has been restructured and new guidelines for implementation and structure have been developed. The individuals on the advisory group represent a cross-section of MCAEL's coalition partners. MCAEL makes an effort to ensure that the group is a representative sample of all the ESOL programs in the network that together provide English classes in every region of the County,

MCAEL measures the success of our programming through results from surveys taken at the end of every meeting/workshop:

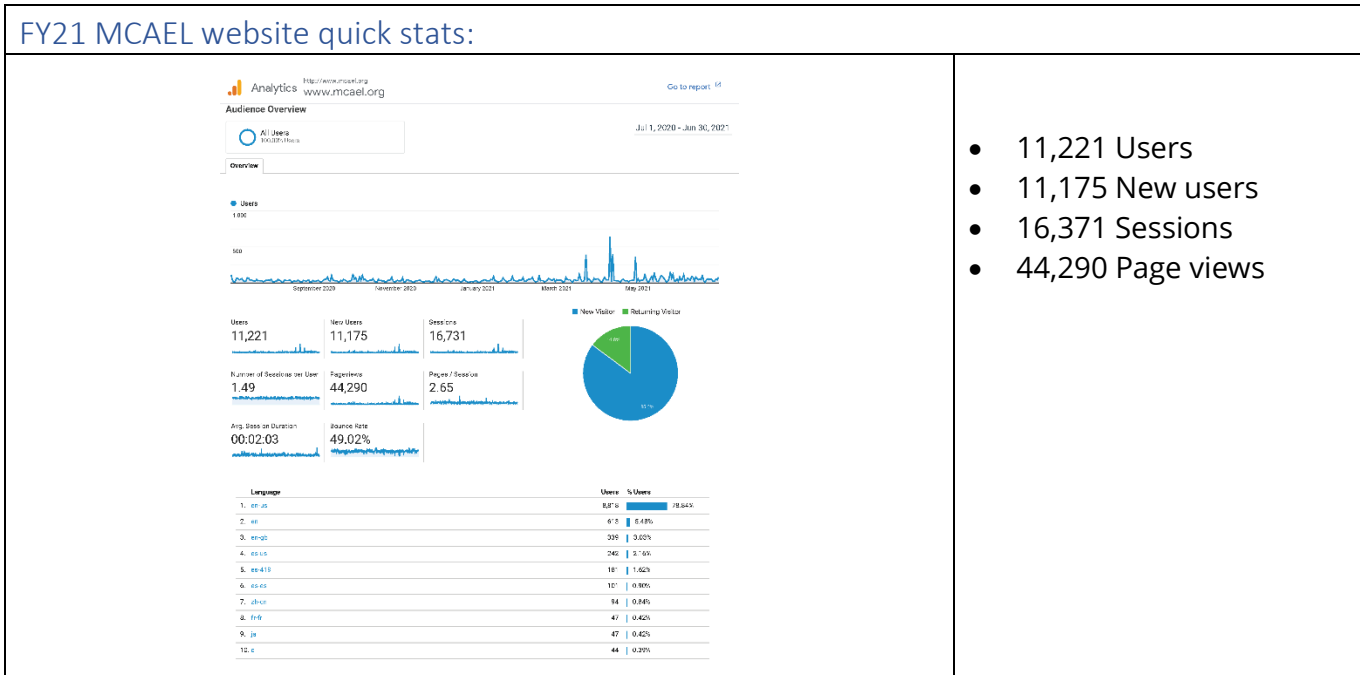
### **Provider Meeting Results**

Survey results (average % over all six meetings):

- "The objectives of the meeting were met" – 97% strongly agreed or agreed
- "I had an opportunity to share ideas" - 95% strongly agreed or agreed
- "I gained useful information from this meeting" – 99 strongly agreed or agreed
- "Meeting was a good use of my time" – 99% strongly agreed or agreed%
- "I learned of at least one new resource (person, website, book, organization, etc.)" - 93% strongly agreed or agreed

**100% of Instructor Workshop attendees** strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I learned of at least one new resource (person, website, book, organization, etc.)."

6. Provide information to the community and students seeking ESL and information resources through an electronically available Provider Directory listing ESL Providers in Montgomery County and their services, available on MCAEL's website. This website must also contain MCAEL's grant Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and links to other adult ESOL resources, such as advocacy, training, and other professional development and capacity building resources.



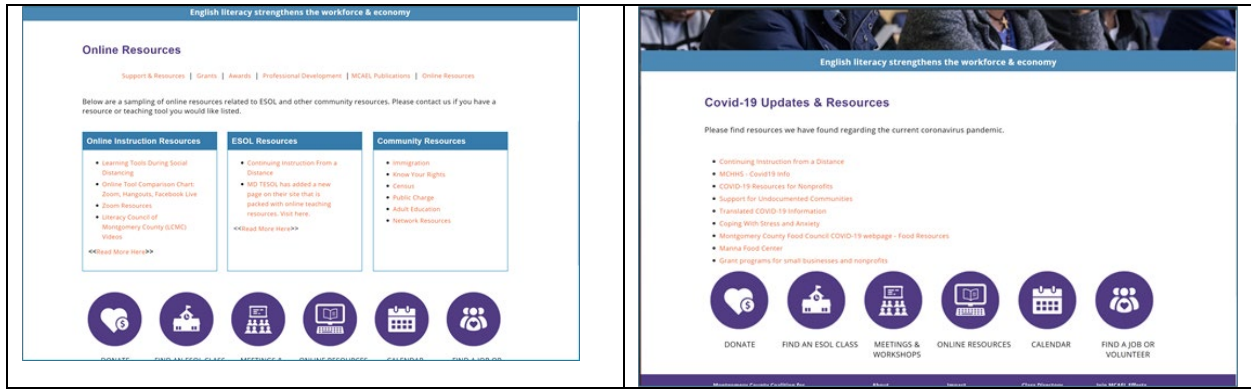
Top MCAEL pages:

Rank	Page	Pageviews	% Pageviews
1.	/	11,890	26.85%
2.	/online-resources	1,544	3.49%
3.	/provider-directory-view	1,365	3.08%
4.	/providers	1,177	2.66%
5.	/calendar-node-field-date/month?field_category_type_nid=All	1,119	2.53%
6.	/volunteer	1,062	2.40%
7.	/jobs	1,000	2.26%
8.	/user	985	2.22%
9.	/about-mcael	846	1.91%
10.	/esol-summer-classes	661	1.49%

### Community Resources

We continue to provide updates and information on COVID-19 resources:

- <https://www.mcael.org/covid-19-updates-resources>
- <https://www.mcael.org/online-resources>
- <https://www.mcael.org/network-videos>



## Professional Development

Launched 2 new online projects, an online version of our print Program Administrator Toolkit and Foundations for Adult ESOL Instruction.

- Program Administrator Toolkit (as outlined in section 3)** - This online version of MCAEL's Program Administrator Toolkit contains all the content from the original hard copy version published in 2019, as well as an additional section on Distance Learning. The toolkit is organized into sections that are in the general order one would encounter when planning and implementing a class.



- Foundations for Adult ESOL Instruction (as outlined in section 3)** - This online course introduces the theories, skills and techniques used in the adult ESOL class and provides a foundation for teaching English to adult learners. Foundations for Adult ESOL Instruction online course introduces the theories, skills and techniques used in the adult ESOL class and provides a foundation for teaching English to adult learners.



## Supplemental Information

### 1. Events attended and network building: (sample of major and regular event attendance by MCAEL staff)

- Worksource Montgomery Partners Meetings
- Meetings with Office of Community Partnerships
- African Affairs Advisory Group Meeting
- Silver Spring Complete Census Count Committee
- Silver Spring Community Covid Committee
- Thriving Germantown HUB partner coordination meetings
- Coalition partner graduation ceremonies
- MAACCE Conference presentation & attendance
- Courage is Contagious – Event with Congressman Jamie Raskin to celebrate the courage in the coalition during the past year
- COABE online workshops
- ProLiteracy online workshops
- Montgomery Moving Forward Leadership Group Meetings and Convenings
- Nonprofit Montgomery Covid-19 Webinars and Updates (presenter and attendee)
- Coordinated MoCo Welcoming Week Activities
- Hosted Voter Education Webinar

### 2. Communication - announcements on resources & opportunities including but not limited to:

- Professional development trainings/ conferences (local, regional & national)
- MCAEL meetings and workshops
- Community meetings (e.g. Down County Providers, Workforce Mtgs)
- Awards and stipends and additional funding opportunities for instructors
- Surveys to gain feedback and insight on how to improve MCAEL provider and instructor meetings
- Resources on COVID-19 and online teaching
- Donated supplies/books to member organizations (local & national)
- Current research, ESOL best practices/teaching tools
- Citizenship challenges
- Information on current political climate issues
- Fundraising and Advocacy
- Monthly ESOL Organization Spotlight
- Instructional resources
- MCAEL Advisory Group
- Analysis of FY20 MCAEL learner data and most recent Census data on the Limited English Proficient (LEP) population

### 3. Meetings, Workshops and Trainings offered by MCAEL:

MCAEL offered a comprehensive set of meetings, workshops and trainings. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we also offered time-sensitive trainings to facilitate the transition for programs to teach on-line. We hosted more frequent meetings during the early -pandemic time period to offer information, support and training to the MCAEL network. **(See Attachment)**

#### Leveraged Expert Connections:

To provide expert training and information, MCAEL identifies area experts to present to or develop workshops for the coalition.

Montgomery College, MDTESOL, WATESOL, TESOL ProLiteracy, COABE (Coalition On Adult Basic Education), CASA, Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center, Frederick Community College, Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center Department of Labor, Montgomery County Volunteer Center, US



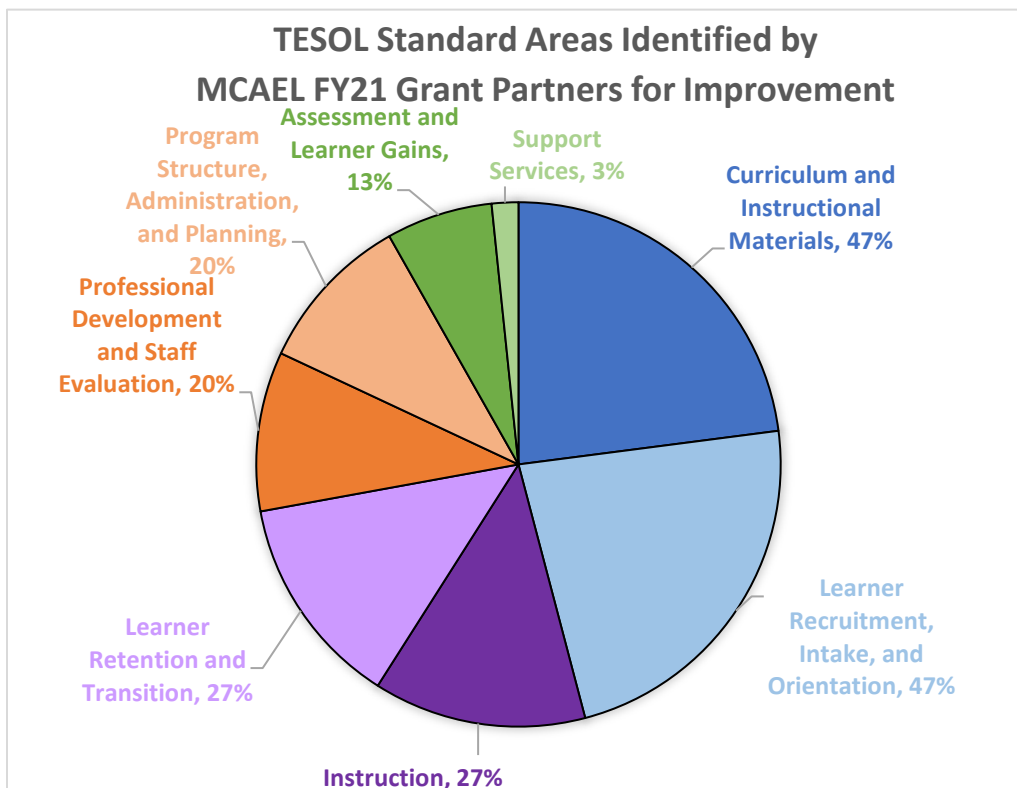
Census Bureau, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Montgomery County Office of Community Partnerships, Ethiopian Community Center, Vietnamese American Services, Montgomery County Food Council.

### **MCAEL’s adherence to general nonprofit best practice activities and new projects:**

MCAEL continues to be a well-regarded nonprofit which adheres to nonprofit best practices. MCAEL has consistently received clean audits on an annual basis. MCAEL’s board hold regular meetings and its committees (Finance, Executive, Governance and Resource Development meet and act on matters consistent with the bylaws and the needs of the organization. MCAEL staff participate in trainings via Nonprofit Montgomery, Catalogue for Philanthropy, Leadership Montgomery and other area organizations to stay current in best practices and evolving issues. For the second time, MCAEL was selected as a “top charity” by The Catalogue for Philanthropy to be in the 2020-2021 class, a designation for the next three years.

MCAEL staff and board are working on implementing our Race Equity Strategic Plan (developed through our participation in Leadership Montgomery’s Race Equity Action Leadership Program) which is a broad plan to address both our internal policies and procedures and external training and opportunities throughout the coalition.

### **Question 3- Attachment**



Every year MCAEL grant partners are asked to identify 1-3 areas for improvement in the implementation of their programs. Below are some examples of program progress in FY21, from a range of programs of different sizes and levels of development.

Faced with the need to recruit new learners without traditional in-person methods and to support them to ensure a successful online experience, almost half of the 30 FY21 MCAEL-funded programs focused on

“Learner Recruitment, Intake and Orientation,” working to improve their online outreach, registration and placement test processes, and orientations.

- **Covenant Life Church** initiated social media channels to reach out to new students and encourage them to enroll in classes and created a new trilingual webpage for learners to access information on their program. These efforts were helpful and as the year progressed, they were able to recruit a larger number of students for the spring term.
- Similarly, the **Thriving Germantown Hub ESOL Program (TG)** run by **Sheppard Pratt** found that learner recruitment was a challenge for the fall and winter sessions due to many participants lacking the necessary computer skills to be successful in class. More extensive outreach and advertising for the spring sessions resulted a very successful recruitment of new learners. Orientation was modified to make it more learner friendly: it focused on getting students logged into the virtual classroom, providing the schedule for the session, and meeting the instructor. As a result, more learners who attended orientation attended the first day of class and stayed in the class.

Another 47% of grant partners chose to improve their curriculum and instructional materials, to ensure online learner gains.

- **CASA** found that the transition from in-person to distance learning in the spring of 2020 was extremely challenging due in large part to learners' low digital literacy and limited access to technology. They therefore undertook an extensive redesign of the curriculum materials for their **Life Skills ESOL Program**, across all nine course levels. The new materials have been designed for distance learning as well a traditional classroom space where social distancing is enforced. New materials were also created to develop students' digital literacy skills within the context of English language acquisition. Teachers participated in a series of trainings before the start of each session to ensure that they were prepared to effectively facilitate student-focused and task-based ESOL activities. As a result, 84% of post-tested students demonstrated learning gains this year. 93% of surveyed learners reported that they now read better in English, 83% that they now write better, and 86% that they now speak better.
- **Ethiopian Community Center** revised the curriculum for their **African Immigrant Vocational ESOL Program** based on student evaluations and teacher recommendations; one of the changes is that it now incorporates a 30-minute conversation practice at every session. Moreover, the program administrator conducted teacher evaluations twice a month and gave feedback to the instructors. The program has seen specific improvements in the classroom as a result.
- To identify learners' personal goals and assess their progress toward these goals, the **English Literacy Program for Linkages to Learning Program**, implemented by **Sheppard Pratt**, created easy-to-use surveys for learners; learners were asked to identify their goals prior to starting the semester. These goals were integrated into the curriculum for each level. A second survey was given at the end of the term to identify improvements made towards reaching their goals. Approximately 85% of the learners in the fall and 95% in the spring reported they improved in an area previously reported as a goal. The surveys were made using Microsoft Forms and permitted learners to answer a few brief questions using their smart phones; results were tallied automatically. Instructors created standardized tests which was another way to check learner's progress.

- **Mill Creek Parish United Methodist Church** found that one of the greatest learnings of this year was the importance of having a dedicated Program Administrator for their ESOL program. With MCAEL funding, they were able to pay a part-time Program Administrator who provided regular, on-going support for their teachers and students. The Program Administrator worked to ensure that teachers were equipped with information and tools sent from MCAEL as well as tricks of the trade and other resources that helped both students and teachers have a better learning experience.

## Section 5- Attachment -Summary of Training and Workshops

### MCAEL FY21 Professional Development & Training

#### Instructor Workshops

MCAEL provides trainings for instructors on a variety of topics and at a variety of levels to support the range of experience levels. Below is an overview of the professional development we offered this past year for our class instructors:

<b>Workshops</b>	<b>Date of Training</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
Engaging Activities for Teaching ESL Virtually	Sept 30	44
Amplify Classroom Interaction	Oct 28	14
Implementing Digital Literacy	Nov 18	26
Instructor Sharing Session	Dec 16	18
Collaboration and Engagement	Feb 24	36
Instructor PD Video review and discussion: Teaching pronunciation in an online class.	Mar 24	16
TESOL Conference 2021 Sharing Session	April 28	19
Social Emotional Learning and Culturally Responsive Activities for the Classroom	June 30	20

#### Provider Meetings

This year, based on feedback from our coalition members, we continued to hold two different types of meetings. First, Topics in Program Administration (TPA) (chosen from TESOL standards topics) were facilitated discussions that enabled program administrators to share and learn from their peers. Second, we also held Network Meetings (Network) for both instructors and program administrators focused on how to better support learners and geared toward broader audiences.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Training</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
Network Meeting: Vital Services for Learners in the County (Food assistance resources, rent relief, Emergency Assistance Relief Program)	October 14	22
Topics in Program Administration (TPA): Outreach, Recruitment, Retention	November 12	17
TPA: Staffing your Adult ESOL Program	December 9	20
TPA: Professional Development and your Adult ESOL program	February 10	18
Network Meeting: COVID-19 vaccination update, tax preparation assistance, and health services	March 10	20
TPA: Measuring the success of your Adult ESOL program - Learner Progress	April 14	17