



## **FY20 Adult English Literacy PROGRAM Grant Guidelines**

### **Introduction & Purpose**

The mission of the Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy is “to strengthen the countywide adult English literacy network to support a thriving community and effective workforce.” To this end, MCAEL provides support for adult English literacy services in the county through grants and technical support with generous funding from the Montgomery County Government. MCAEL seeks to increase the availability of adult ESOL and literacy services that support identified community needs and diverse populations and to improve the quality of these services.

MCAEL is pleased to partner once again with the Montgomery County Government to offer grant support for **Adult English Literacy Programs** in **FY20 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020)**. To be eligible for a Program Grant the applicant organization must:

- Offer 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 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)

(MCAEL also offers Literacy Access Grants that can be used for new/emerging classes, drop-in classes, and/or programs that offer less than 120 instructional hours per learner per year; please see the separate Grant Guidelines for Literacy Access Grants at [www.mcael.org/grants](http://www.mcael.org/grants).)

### **MCAEL FY20 Grant Program Focus**

MCAEL’s current overarching goal is to increase the number of learners reached from 15,000 to 21,000 by 2021. This goal recognizes that despite the committed work of the MCAEL coalition of providers and the steady increase of learners served over the years, there continue to be thousands of adults who have limited English skills in Montgomery County, who could benefit from ESOL instruction. To significantly increase the number of learners served, MCAEL is proactively working to improve access to English classes through continuing and new partnerships, and through its grant program. (For more information on MCAEL’s strategic plan, see: [https://www.mcael.org/sites/default/files/mcael\\_strategic\\_plan\\_2018-2021.pdf](https://www.mcael.org/sites/default/files/mcael_strategic_plan_2018-2021.pdf).)

In this context, applications that address the following may be considered favorably, although final funding decisions are dependent on the FY20 County Budget process and the full grants portfolio:

- 1) Expanded or new services to meet the needs of underserved geographic areas (especially Upcounty and East County) or underserved populations;
- 2) Classes on Saturday or Sunday; and
- 3) Increasing access to English instruction for workers at their place of employment.

MCAEL encourages provider organizations to avail themselves of data and reports on the MCAEL and county government websites to understand current underserved communities and to consider how their programming might reach those in need. MCAEL collects and analyzes demographic data on learners to identify the underserved geographic areas and populations; the FY18 interactive data presentation will be available in February 2019 at [www.mcael.org/montgomery-county-md](http://www.mcael.org/montgomery-county-md). (Data from previous years is also available here.) Applicants can refer to the County Executive's 2019 priorities (see <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Government/visionStatement.html>) and other valuable county data resources on the CountyStat website (<https://stat.montgomerycountymd.gov/>). County data collected through the American Community Survey (<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>) may also be useful.

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

- provides English literacy instruction that is of high benefit to learners (practically rather than theoretically);
- has clearly defined the goals, scope, location, needs, budget, and means for evaluation of program;
- maximizes the use of outside funds, other support services, and partnerships;
- can meet the responsibilities set out in the Responsibilities of Grant Recipients on Page 7 of these guidelines.

During the application review process, Grant Panel reviewers may consider program improvements, changed outcomes, and/or increase in the number of learners as justification for increased funding.

### **Use of funds**

For Adult English Literacy Program Grants, funding may be used to maintain, expand, and improve delivery of adult English literacy services to those who live and/or work in Montgomery County. This includes provision of approved 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 English literacy services, including:

- professional development activities for instructional staff;
- curriculum development activities;
- implementation of an assessment procedure; and
- development or improvement of student/learner recruitment, intake, orientation, retention and/or transition procedures.

***MCAEL strongly encourages creative partnerships that leverage resources (e.g. for childcare, transportation, space).***

MCAEL funding cannot be used for:

- Refreshments or food
- Gift cards or gifts for volunteers (stipends are acceptable)

### **Who is Eligible to Apply?**

Applicants must be a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, have a similar designation from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service or have a partnership that includes a nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) status. Nonprofits 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 previously applied for other County-administered grant programs, such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. 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.

### **Funds and Funding Levels**

Historically, funding requests have exceeded the amount of funds available. Thus, competition for grant funds is strong. Please be aware that even if an application is successful, the MCAEL grants panel may recommend that the applicant be awarded a partial level of funding. Applicants are encouraged to take this information into account while developing program plans and budgets for the coming year. MCAEL encourages programs to leverage other resources and develop contingency plans.

The total amount of funds available will be in accordance with the final approved County budget for FY20. All programs supported by the grant must be implemented during the grant period of July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020. All grant funds must be spent within this period; any funds that are not spent within this timeframe may be recaptured by MCAEL.

*Due to the timing of the county disbursement process, funds will likely not be available before September 1, 2019.*

For reference, information on awards granted in previous years is available on MCAEL's website at [www.mcael.org/grants](http://www.mcael.org/grants).

### **Panel Review Process**

All funding decisions are made by a volunteer Grant Panel composed of community members. The panel members are selected to represent a diversity of experience and expertise in one or more of the following: the local community and community's needs, nonprofit management, adult ESOL, literacy, and/or government/non-profit grant making. Each panelist attends an in-depth orientation, and reads and evaluates all proposals based on the criteria in the Proposal Evaluation Guide (see Page 8).

The Grant Panel divides into small groups to interview applicants to clarify questions about individual proposals. Interviews for this grant cycle are scheduled for May 8 and May 10, 2019. (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. Board members who are themselves providers are excluded from this approval process.

***MCAEL staff members support applicants through the process and coordinates with the Grant Review Panel to facilitate the grants process; MCAEL staff members do not make funding decisions or vote on funding allocations.***

### **Application**

For FY20, grant applications must be submitted via MCAEL's online grant portal, accessible via the MCAEL website. Here applicants will be asked to create an account, create an organization profile, and complete an application form. Applicants are also required to complete and upload a Data and Budget Workbook, available both within the application form, and on the MCAEL grants webpage. Instructions for this Excel workbook are included in the workbook.

In addition, applicants will be asked to upload the supporting organizational documents listed below within the online application forms. Please submit these in PDF format to ensure proper formatting and readability.

- 1) Proof of applicant non-profit status (letter of determination of tax status from the IRS.

- 2) Organization's Statement of Financial Activities (Income Statement) detailing revenue and expenses for:
  - a. previous fiscal year (FY18) with budget compared to actuals and
  - b. current fiscal year (FY19)
- 3) Organization's reviewed or audited financial statement for last completed fiscal year, if applicable/available
- 4) Board of Directors list with organizational affiliations

#### **Proposal Application Submission and Deadline**

Proposals should be submitted on the MCAEL grants portal by **Tuesday, April 2, 2019 at 5 p.m.** The system will not accept applications after 5 pm. Applicants are welcome (and encouraged) to turn in proposals before this date.

**Note:** In line with its capacity-building role, MCAEL staff will be available the week of March 11 to answer specific questions on the grant application. Priority will be given to first-time applicants, new provider staff, and applicants for Access Grants. A sign-up sheet will be available at: [www.mcael.org/grants](http://www.mcael.org/grants).

#### **Grants Information Meeting**

A grant information meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 30, 2019 at 1 p.m. in "The Boss" Room at the *Conference Center at 9200 Corporate Blvd, Rockville, MD 20850*. MCAEL staff will provide background on the grants program, give an overview of this year's application process and timeline, provide training on the how to use the new online grants portal, and answer questions from potential applicants. Attendance is strongly encouraged.

### TIMELINE FOR MCAEL GRANTS PROCESS

Fri, January 25, 2019	FY20 grants guidelines made available on MCAEL website, <a href="http://www.mcael.org/grants">www.mcael.org/grants</a> .
Wed, January 30, 1 p.m.	Grant Information Meeting at the Conference Center at 9200 Corporate Blvd., Rockville, MD 20850.
Week of March 11	MCAEL staff available by appointment for specific application questions. Priority will be given to first-time applicants, new program staff, and access grant applicants. (Sign up at <a href="http://www.mcael.org/grants">www.mcael.org/grants</a> .)
Tues, April 2, 5 p.m.	Applications must be submitted via MCAEL Grants Portal
Wed, May 8 and Fri, May 10 (specific times TBA)	Applicants will be scheduled for in-person interviews with members of the MCAEL Grant Review Panel.
May/June	MCAEL Grant Review Panel members review applications. County Council approves County budget. Grant Review Panel meets to develop funding recommendations. MCAEL Board reviews funding recommendations and approves grant awards.
Mid-June	Applicants are notified in writing of the MCAEL board's final funding decision. Awards also announced at <a href="http://www.mcael.org">www.mcael.org</a> .
June-July	Award recipients make any necessary adjustments to program and budget to align with amount awarded, discuss grant requirements with MCAEL staff, and sign Letters of Agreement.*
September	First payments made to grant recipients.
July 2019-June 2020	Grantees deliver services, spend funds and submit reports.

*\* Funds are not committed to a program until both parties have signed a Letter of Agreement (LOA). Funds for programs for which LOAs have not been signed by the deadline may be reallocated to other programs.*

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF 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 or similar designation from 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; \*\*
- Submit and maintain information on the MCAEL website for the FY20 Provider Directory;
- 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 2020, respectively, and other grant documents required by MCAEL in a timely manner;
- Attend at least five Provider Meetings/Workshops throughout the FY20 year and have one instructor attend one workshop each session (fall/spring);
- Participate in the MCAEL TESOL Standards/Outcomes Project (Data and Review (Self/Peer));
- Work with MCAEL in the event a site visit is requested;
- 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.*

**FY20 PROPOSAL EVALUATION GUIDE**  
**For Adult English Literacy Program Grant Applications**

Each proposal will be reviewed and scored by the Grant Review Panel using this Evaluation Guide as general guidance, for a possible total of 100 points.

**Introduction: (8 pts)**

- Clear connection between organizational mission and the adult English literacy program being provided/proposed
- Experience and success in providing adult English literacy services and/or serving particular target population (including achieving previous goals and learner outcomes)

**Target Population and Program Objectives: (12 pts)**

- Clear identification and evidence of service need for specific population:
- For a continuing program, evidence of on-going service need
- For program expansion or a new program, evidence of increased or unmet service need and the contribution of the proposed program to address this need.
- Understanding of the particular needs/challenges of the target population for learning English
- Clearly identified program objectives

**Program Design and Delivery: (28 pts)**

- An effectively designed program that responds to the needs identified
- A comprehensive description of services/activities to be provided through the program
- Clear implementation plan and procedures to accomplish program objectives
- Understanding of potential barriers to implementation and a plan to address them
- For continuing programs, clear explanation of how program has improved/adapted services based on lessons learned

**Program Outcomes and Evaluation: (28 pts)**

- Clear identification of measurable expected outcomes of the program
- Well-defined procedure (indicators/assessment tools) for measuring program outcomes (related to TESOL Standards)
- Well-defined procedure (indicators/assessment tools) for measuring learner gains

**Organizational Capacity & Sustainability: (12 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 the program to be sustained at a quality level throughout and beyond the fiscal year in relation to processes, policies, funding, and staff

**Program Budget and Financial Accountability: (12 pts)**

- 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