

Adult Education

Even with unemployment rates at historic lows, more than six million Americans remain out of work.¹ The barriers to employment are complex. Among those who are working, many struggle to earn family-sustaining wages. These challenges expose workers, families, and communities across our nation to instability and hardship. Meanwhile, employers and industry sectors struggle to find the talent they need to remain competitive in a global economy. Adult education plays an important role in assisting adults to gain educational, workplace, language, and civic engagement skills that fulfill workforce needs and help adults build pathways to sustainable employment and wellbeing.

Areas of Expertise

WestEd's team is experienced and committed to improving access to post secondary education, access to living wage jobs, and economic mobility for adult learners. We work with adult education, workforce, and higher education leaders and systems at all levels to realize our goal to increase economic mobility and equity for our nation's most vulnerable populations and communities.

Our areas of expertise include:

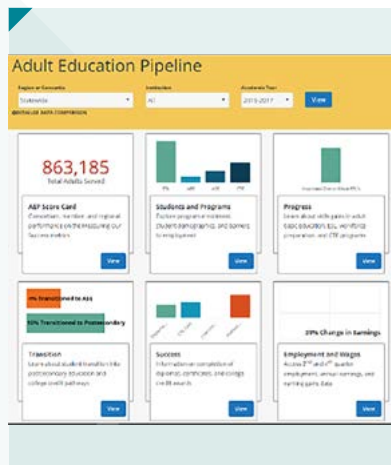
- Improving data and accountability and development of regional education and training systems.
- Developing innovative tools to support data-informed program development and improvement in adult education, including strengthening pathways for adult and English Learners into postsecondary education and the workforce.
- Developing toolkits and delivery of technical assistance and professional development to improve practice and outcomes in adult education.
- Developing new models and professional development for mathematics and literacy instruction in adult education.
- Conducting research in issues relating to math, reading, and ESL instruction, and producing effective models for transition from adult education to postsecondary education and college.

¹ Data from [U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics](#).

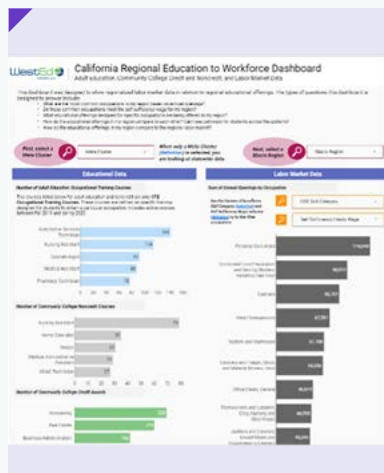
Selected Projects: Data and Accountability Tools



California Adult Education Program – Data and Accountability Design Process: WestEd led a facilitated design process with the California Department of Education, Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, and adult education and college practitioners to develop program definitions, metrics, accountability system, and alignment of basic skills standards for colleges and adult education for the California Adult Education Program (CAEP). WestEd facilitated multiple committees in 40 hours of meetings over eight weeks in a design sprint and wrote the final report to the California Legislature on behalf of the State Superintendent of Schools and Community Colleges Chancellor. WestEd also led additional state-wide field teams focused on related topics to inform best practices and state policy.



Adult Education Data Pipeline: In 2019, WestEd designed and built one of the only intersegmental adult education dashboards that tracks transition of adult education students into postsecondary education and the workforce. The Pipeline includes metrics aligned to adult education student journeys tracking enrollment, progress, transition, completion of postsecondary credentials, employment and earnings. All metrics can be disaggregated by major equity populations and by the 13 WIOA special populations. Visit the AE Pipeline at <https://www.calpassplus.org/Launchboard/Adult-Education-Pipeline.aspx>



Adult Education to Workforce Dashboard: In 2020, WestEd completed a scan of 525 adult school, community college noncredit, and community college credit Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. An interactive tool compares Adult Education, noncredit, and credit CTE programs by region alongside occupational demand and self-sufficiency wage data to help regional consortia create integrated pathways from adult education into community college programs leading to living wage jobs. Visit the [Regional Adult Education to Workforce Dashboard](#) to learn more.

Technical Assistance and Professional Development

OCTAE – Building Teacher Capacity for Adult Education Math Instruction:

WestEd is developing and field testing the Adult Numeracy Instruction Professional Development program. The online program, which will eventually be housed in the LINCS system, is designed to help states meet more rigorous math content standards and based on the latest research on pedagogy and student engagement. WestEd's development work draws from its extensive math education portfolio, which includes the evidenced-based Carnegie Math Pathways community college courses and professional development programs.

OCTAE – Enhancing Access for Refugees and New Immigrants (Integrated Education and Training for English Language Learners):

WestEd is part of the multi-agency team (with RTI International, SAFAL, and World Education) planning and developing technical assistance and resources focused on building knowledge and supporting implementation of Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) programming and activities.

Project REACH – Building Pathways for Adult Learners of Color:

WestEd, in partnership with the California Community College Foundation, is funded by the Lumina Foundation to support a series of institutes focused on building pathways for adult learners of color in over 25 community college credential and degree pathways from adult education and other community partners. As a part of this project, WestEd is partnering with community colleges in California and nationwide to provide technical assistance and data modeling to support pathway development.

Using Human-Centered Design to Improve Adult Education Pathways:

In 2018, WestEd led a statewide effort in California to train 60 adult education consortia in the use of human- and customer-centered design (HCD) to improve

services and pathways for adult learners. This involved shepherding design teams from each consortium through a nine-week process where they went through the processes of HCD including ideation, empathy interviews, student journey mapping, rapid prototyping, and iteration to ensure program improvement.

Delta Sierra TDLAM Adult Education Alliance:

Using occupational demand and skills analysis, employer engagement, and human-centered design principles, WestEd guided a consortium planning process that included various inter-sectional agencies and leaders to create an integrated pathway and bridge system to assist low-wage adult learners gain employment and increase access to college credit pathways in Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics and Manufacturing (TDLAM).

Research

Institute of Education Sciences (IES), US Dept of Ed – Adult Numeracy in the Digital Era: Adaptive Technology for Quantitative and Digital Literacy:

WestEd is developing and pilot testing a technology-enabled adult numeracy course and corresponding professional development designed for adult basic education learners. Building upon the strong evidence-based instructional model and technological infrastructure of the Carnegie Math Pathways Quantway courses, the digital course will provide a personalized and adaptive learning experience, designed with applied contexts relevant for adult learners to support development of numeracy and digital literacy.

Institute of Education Sciences (IES), US Dept of Ed – Virtual Strategies for Improving Reading in Adult Learners:

WestEd has a current IES proposal in submission in partnership with Rutgers and Penn State to develop and evaluate a virtual application and platform for improving reading skills for low literacy adult

learners. This application will provide a flexible learning environment that provides reading practice aligned to the level of the adult learner with strong internal supports and a corresponding badging system for identifying learner competencies as they improve.

Institute of Education Sciences (IES), US Dept of Ed – Understanding Outcomes for Adult High School Diploma and Equivalency Completers and Non-Completers: WestEd is working with Rutgers in the early stages of developing an IES

application that will provide a comprehensive understanding of outcomes for completers and non-completers in adult high school diploma and equivalency programs. Using unitary student data and matching against postsecondary and employment administrative data sets, this study will examine data and outcomes related to transition in postsecondary education, employment patterns, comparing diploma completers against HSE completers and differential outcomes for the different equivalency tests used by the states. ♦