Increasing Access:
A Coalition’s Efforts to Bring English Classes
to Employees at Work

September 27, 2019
❖ Introduction to MCAEL/Montgomery County
❖ Our approach to English classes at work
❖ Examples of MCAEL-supported programs
❖ Lessons learned, future direction
❖ Q&A
Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy
Montgomery County, Maryland

- County-based coalition established in 2006
- Collaboration, capacity-building, coordination
- Increasing access to quality English instruction
“21,000 by 2021” - Strategic Goals

❖ Empower providers to offer quality programs and instruction that lead to learning gains
❖ Increase number of high-quality instructors
❖ Expand partnerships to enable access to a range of new workplace and community-based classes.
Capacity-building and public engagement

- Grantor of county money for community grants –
  - $1.26m for FY20 (27 programs, 20 organizations)
- PD, resources and technical assistance for program administrators and Instructors
- Community engagement
  - class directory
  - data collection, analysis, sharing via interactive Storymap
  - advocacy
Who is in the MCAEL coalition?

- **Literacy organization**
  PT and FT ESOL-trained staff

- **Social service organization**
  PT and/or FT professional staff

- **Community-based organization**
  Paid or volunteer program staff and instructors

- **Faith-based institution**
  Often volunteer instructors – little or no funding
LEP Residents per Square Mile

Montgomery County, Maryland

Source: ACS 2016 (1-yr)
Montgomery County Facts

- Total Population: 1.06 million
- Percent foreign-born: 32%
- Number Limited English Proficient: 127,563
- Number accessing adult ESOL: about 15,000
Provider Workplace English Programs

- Montgomery College – English for the Workplace, vocational English
- STEP – training for restaurant workers, etc
- CASA – drop-in classes at welcome centers
- Charles E. Smith Life Communities/Bender JCC of Greater Washington
Why support English classes at work?

❖ Coordinating role to increase access

❖ Bring classes to where learners are, address barriers of
  • work schedules
  • reliable and affordable childcare
  • reliable and affordable transportation
  • time in the day
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Hrs/week</th>
<th>Session length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asbury Methodist Village</td>
<td>CCRC</td>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
<td>4 skills</td>
<td>1.5 hrs x 2</td>
<td>8/10 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventist Healthcare</td>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>Various/Housekeeping</td>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td>1 hr x 2/1 hr x 3</td>
<td>8/10 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denizens Brewing Company</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Kitchen staff</td>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td>1.5 hr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BF Saul (3 hotels)</td>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>Housekeeping, Facilities</td>
<td>Oral communication</td>
<td>1.5 hr x 2</td>
<td>19 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEICO</td>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>Facilities Maintenance</td>
<td>Business Writing</td>
<td>2 hrs x 2</td>
<td>13 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lessons Learned (selected)

❖ Involve HR leadership and managers early
❖ Informal instruments more appropriate for pre-class assessment
❖ Outcomes indicators for both specific English skills gained and improved performance on the job – important, but challenging to assess
❖ Instructors should have an understanding of the work environment/culture
❖ Instructors need ongoing support with customizing content, identifying instructional materials, coordination with employer
Going forward

❖ Focus classes on life skills rather than job-related English
❖ Integrate in some job-related content when teaching skills
❖ Literacy, beginning, and intermediate levels
❖ Fine-tuning working with partners (employers and providers)
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