English for Speakers of Other Languages:

Expanding Access for Montgomery County's Linguistically Diverse Population

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Montgomery County Council Summer Fellow

Contents

About the Fellow

Anna Nacci is a graduate student at George Washington University, currently pursuing her Master of Arts in Public Policy with a concentration in Philosophy and Social Policy. Anna is motivated to enter the field of policymaking to create more equitable legislation that mitigates the impacts of systemic injustices against marginalized groups. She has an interest in reproductive health, education, and social policy. Anna received her undergraduate degree in Politics & Government and Philosophy from Ohio Wesleyan University in 2024.

Acknowledgements

Key Definitions

- ❖ **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) –** Classes that teach individuals who speak other languages to read, write, understand, and speak English. While these classes may also be provided to students in elementary, middle, and high school, this report is primarily concerned with ESOL classes that serve Montgomery County's adult population.

- ❖ **Primary Language –** The language that an individual is most comfortable speaking and is most likely to speak in their home. This is often the native language of their country of origin.

- ❖ **Limited English Proficiency (LEP)** – Applies to individuals who describe themselves as being able to read, write, speak, and understand English less than "very well". In MCAEL learner surveys, individuals have the option to select that they can communicate in English "Very Well", "Well", "Not Well", or "Not at All". Individuals that chose any of the latter three options are identified as having Limited English Proficiency.

- ❖ **Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy (MCAEL)** – A consortium of over 60 ESOL providers in Montgomery County. MCAEL was officially incorporated in 2006, to facilitate coordination and collaboration between the County's various providers. Any organization that holds ESOL classes is a part of the coalition, however some partners also receive grant funding.[1]

- ❖ **Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced ESOL Classes** – The Maryland Department of Labor sets standards for the speaking, reading, writing, and understanding skills must be taught to learners that take various levels of ESOL classes.[2]

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[1] "Mission & History: MCAEL: Montgomery County Maryland." Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy. https://www.mcael.org/mission-history.

[2] "Maryland Content Standards for Adult ESL/ESOL - Adult Education and Literacy Services. Adult Education and Literacy Services - Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning. https://www.dllr.state.md.us/adultliteracy/cs.shtml

- o **Beginner ESOL Classes** – "Learners will determine a purpose for communication and respond using limited spoken English to routine questions in familiar situations. Learners will determine a purpose for listening and can understand some frequently used key words in familiar contexts when spoken slowly and with repetition. Learners will determine a purpose for reading and can read numbers, letters, and some common sight words. Learners can comprehend phrases and some simple sentences with familiar vocabulary with pre-reading assistance. Learners will determine a purpose for writing and can print numbers, letters, and basic sight words related to personal information and other familiar contexts."

- o **Intermediate ESOL Classes** – "Learners can express basic needs and can engage in social conversations in an organized way to address the reason for communicating and use some strategies to monitor the conversation. Learners can monitor comprehension, use listening strategies when participating in a conversation or completing a simple task and can understand learned and new phrases in familiar context. Learners can use reading strategies and context clues to comprehend and analyze clearly organized texts and can reflect on the meaning of the text and combine new knowledge with prior knowledge. Learners can organize, convey, and revise ideas in simple paragraphs in familiar contexts with control of basic grammar structures, spelling and punctuation."

- o **Advanced ESOL Classes** – "Learners can organize thoughts and converse clearly on a variety of subjects using basic grammar, appropriate word choice, register, and pace and are able to express thoughts clearly and creatively using appropriate monitoring strategies. Learners can comprehend conversations on a variety of subjects using monitoring strategies and incorporating new knowledge with prior knowledge. Learners can read, comprehend, and analyze narrative prose and descriptive essays applying appropriate reading strategies, comprehension strategies and prior

knowledge. Learners can produce well-developed descriptive and narrative essays that include the mastery of punctuation and grammar structures and can edit and revise to improve communication."

❖ **High Need Area –** Census tracts in Montgomery County where more than 10 percent of the population above the age of 5 exhibits Limited English Proficiency.

Introduction

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes provide adults who primarily speak other languages the opportunity to learn English. In Montgomery County, there are 63 public, private, and nonprofit organizations that provide ESOL classes, all of which are coordinated by MCAEL, or the Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy. Learners in these classes agree that these classes have improved their English skills, which helps them connect to their community and maintain or improve their health and economic standing. These learner testimonials showcase how English instruction can be incredibly beneficial for residents, especially those that have recently settled in Montgomery County. Given the benefits that these classes can yield, it is important that they are equally accessible to all residents. This report will serve as a needs assessment for these classes, by evaluating barriers to access and providing recommendations for how they may be overcome.

Background

Need for ESOL Instruction

Montgomery County is one of the most diverse counties in the country, with 34.7 percent of its residents having been foreign-born, and 43.4 percent of the population primarily speaking a language other than English. There is wide diversity amongst the residents that are foreign-born and speak a different primary language as well, with more than 12 languages being included in this figure. Aside from English, the most common primary languages for Montgomery County residents to speak are Spanish, Chinese, French, and Afro-Asiatic languages including Somali and Amharic, accounting for 17.7

percent, 3.5 percent, 2.8 percent, and 2.6 percent, respectively.[3] Figure 1 shows each of the languages represented in Montgomery County, and the percentage of the population that primarily speak each.

- English - 56.6%
- Spanish - 17.7%
- Chinese - 3.5%
- French (Including Cajun) - 2.8%
- Amharic, Somali, or other Afro-Asiatic Languages - 2.6%
- Korean - < 2.0%
- Tagalog (including Filipino) - < 2.0%
- Hindi - < 2.0%
- Vietnamese - < 2.0%
- Russian - < 2.0%
- Persian (Including Farsi and Dari) - < 2.0%
- Portugese - < 2.0%
- Yoruba, Twi, Igbo, or other languages of Western Africa - < 2.0%
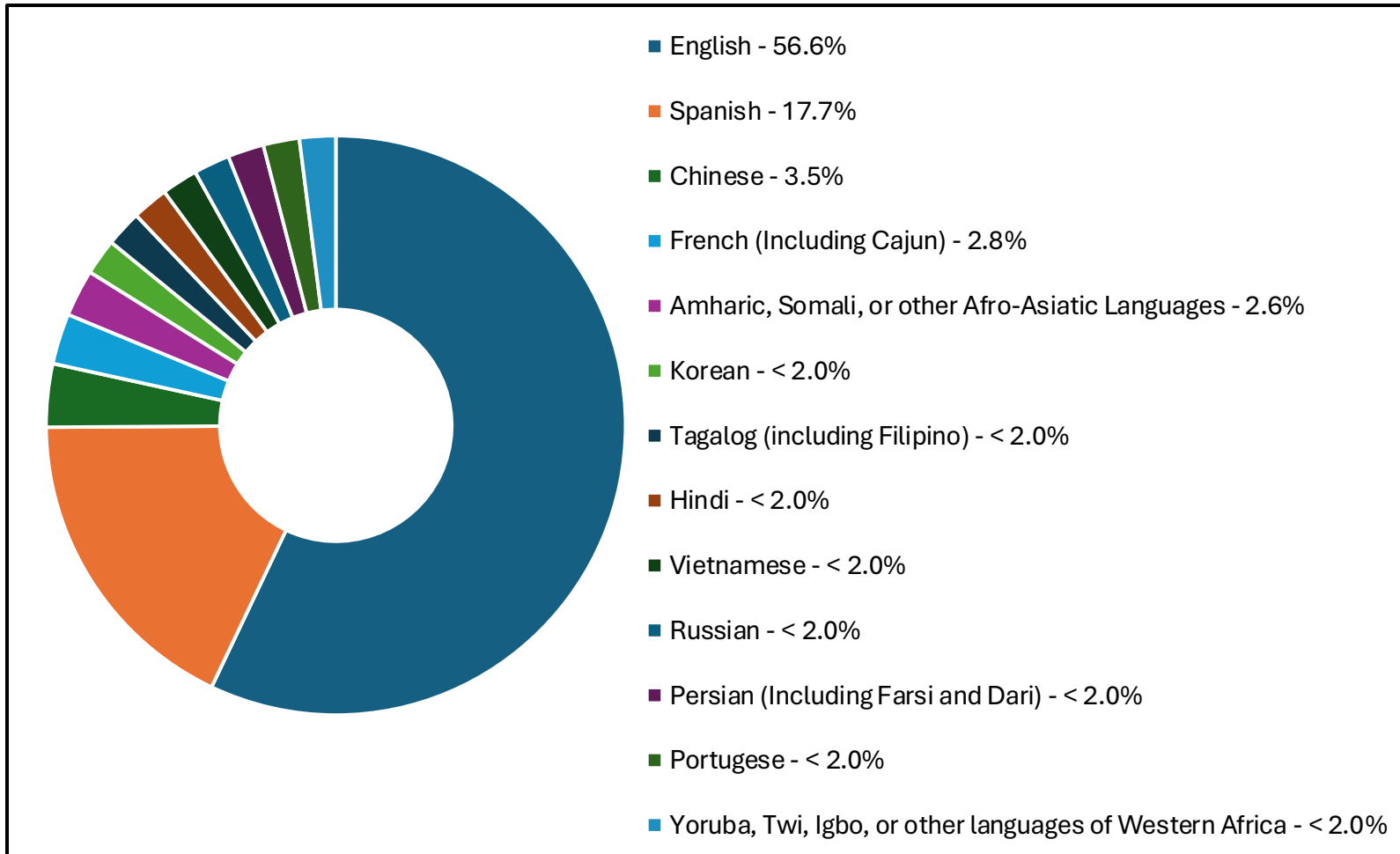
Figure 1. Percentage of Montgomery County Residents that primarily speak each language. Data courtesy of the U.S. Census Bureau.

Of the approximately 477,400 residents for whom English is not their primary language, 161, 560 report having Limited English Proficiency, meaning they speak, write, read, and understand English less than "very well".[4]

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[3] US Census Bureau. "American Community Survey Data - Montgomery County Maryland." Census.gov, July 31, 2024. https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html.

[4] "Ability to Speak English by Language Groups in Montgomery County, MD." Montgomery Coalition for Adult Literacy, https://public.tableau.com/views/FY24AppendixAbilitybyAge/AbilitybyCensusLanguage?:showVizHome=no.

Current ESOL Offerings

The Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center, which operates through the Office of Community Partnerships and the Community Engagement Cluster, is one of the main providers of ESOL classes. The Community Engagement Cluster also includes Advisory Groups for African, African American, Asian, Caribbean, Latino, and Middle Eastern residents. These groups are instrumental in helping the County's diverse populations access services and connect with their community. The liaisons that lead these groups work with County service providers to better meet the needs of the communities that they serve. The Gilchrist Center offers both structured and unstructured classes for Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced English speakers. The structured classes are taught in a classroom setting and follow lesson plans with assignments, whereas the unstructured classes prioritize natural conversations amongst the instructor and participants.

The structured classes are offered three times per year, and last for eight weeks. Students have the option to register for classes that meet in the evenings during the week, or on Saturday mornings. Many of these classes take place over Zoom, with some being offered at the in-person Gilchrist Center locations in Wheaton and Silver Spring (their East-County headquarters). The classes themselves are free; however, some do require a 35-dollar textbook fee. Online registration is required for these classes, and those hoping to join the classes must take an online placement test to determine which class fits their needs. The unstructured, conversational classes are offered year-round and take place each weekday. There is a Zoom option for each day, and an in-person option on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. These classes do not require registration, and students are encouraged to attend as often as they would like.[5]

The Gilchrist Center is a part of the Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy (MCAEL), the County's coordinating organization for ESOL classes. MCAEL coordinates and evaluates all 63 providers within the County and provides grants to providers in need

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[5] "English Classes." Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center, Montgomery County, MD, https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/gilchrist/classes/esol-class.html.

of extra support. The structure, meeting times, and cost of the classes under MCAEL are incredibly varied and depend upon the specific organization that is providing them. Of the current offerings advertised by MCAEL, the term lengths of these classes range from 8 to 35 weeks and are offered four times a year and in some cases accept applications on a rolling basis. These classes may take place over Zoom, but also in the headquarters of nonprofit organizations and a wide range of public meeting spaces around the county, including schools, libraries, places of worship, and senior centers. Many of the classes within the consortium are free, with others costing up to 740 dollars.[6]

While the organization of MCAEL itself does not directly provide structured ESOL classes, they work to identify possible learners and begin their English education through the Community Learning Group (CLG) Program. This program was launched in 2021 and works with community organizations to identify learning groups of 8-10 individuals in areas where there are limited ESOL classes. These groups are often already socially connected in some way, such as being parents at the same school, or being members of a congregation at a local place of worship. The instructor is also recruited from within the learners' immediate community and given training that allows them to lead the class. These classes meet for two hours per week for a period of nine weeks, and the curriculum focuses on community building and common daily conversations.[7]

Success of ESOL Classes

According to MCAEL's annual report, these classes were attended by 12,328 learners in Fiscal Year 2023-24, which represents 29.13 percent of the County's population that exhibits Limited English Proficiency. A large majority of learners (67 percent) identified as female, and the most common age group was between 25 and 44, with those in this range making of 55 percent of the enrollment. El Salvador was also the most common country of origin amongst MCAEL learners.

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[6] "MCAEL Program Directory." Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy. https://www.mcael.org/program-directory.

[7] "Community Learning Groups Program." Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy. https://www.mcael.org/community-learning-groups.

Primary Language Spoken	Number of Learners Served	Percentage of the Language Group's LEP Population Served
Spanish	8,295	11.38
Other Indo-European Languages	2,168	8.38
Asian and Pacific Island Languages	1,057	3.02
All Other Languages	808	6.35
Total	12,328	29.13

Figure 2. Number of learners from each primary language group that received MCAEL instruction in 2024, and the proportion of that group's population with Limited English Proficiency.

As explained in Figure 2, residents who primarily speak Spanish are the largest group to take these classes, with 8,295 learners, or 11.38 percent of the County's population of Spanish-speakers with Limited English Proficiency, attending classes. Speakers of other Indo-European languages made up the second largest group of learners, with 2,168 learners, or 8.38 percent of those with Limited English Proficiency enrolling. 1,057 learners who primarily speak Asian and Pacific Island languages enrolled in the past year, which represents 3.02 percent of those with Limited English Proficiency. Enrollment was also high for learners who primarily speak all other languages, with 808 participating, which represents 6.35 percent of those with Limited English Proficiency.[8]

MCAEL has identified five main goal areas for their ESOL classes, to measure how the instruction may benefit the learners that enroll.

The goal areas are as follows:

1. Increased ability to use English in everyday situations.
2. Improved or sustained health and awareness to/access of medical resources.
3. Improved or maintained economic status.

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[8] "Adults Who Speak English Less than 'Very Well' Served by Language Group." Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy. https://public.tableau.com/views/FY24LearnerServedbyCensusLanguages/LearnersServedbyLanguage2?%3AshowVizHome=no.

4. Improved communication with their child's school/improved support for their child's education.

5. Improved community connectedness.

In FY23-24, 90.38 percent of learners reported progress in Goal Area 1, with 90.65 percent reporting progress in Goal Area 2, and 85.98 percent reporting progress in Goal Area 3. Additionally, 89.69 percent reported progress in Goal Area 4, and 87.02 percent reported progress in Goal Area 5. The average rate of progress amongst these goal areas was 89 percent, which is a sizeable increase from the 2022-23 average of 76 percent.[9]

Accessibility Concerns

While these offerings greatly benefit the residents of Montgomery County, ESOL learners and providers alike have expressed concern that they may not be equally accessible to all who hope to take advantage of them.

Geographic Accessibility
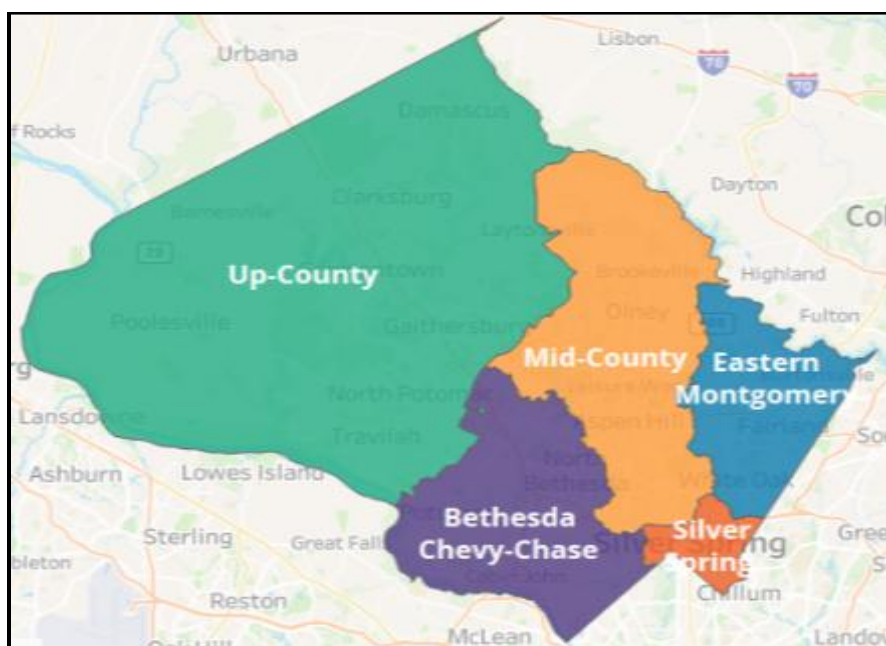
Figure 3. Regions of Montgomery County. Courtesy of MCAEL.

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[9] "Adult English Learning in Montgomery County 2023-24: A Presentation of MCAEL Coalition Data." Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy. https://www.mcael.org/storymap.

According to MCAEL's Executive Board, as well as Gilchrist Center Manager Julien Labiche, the main areas of concern are currently those served by the Up-County and East-County Regional Service Centers. The majority of in-person ESOL classes take place in the Bethesda, Mid-County, and Silver Spring regions of the county, due largely to space constraints and the locations of the organizations.
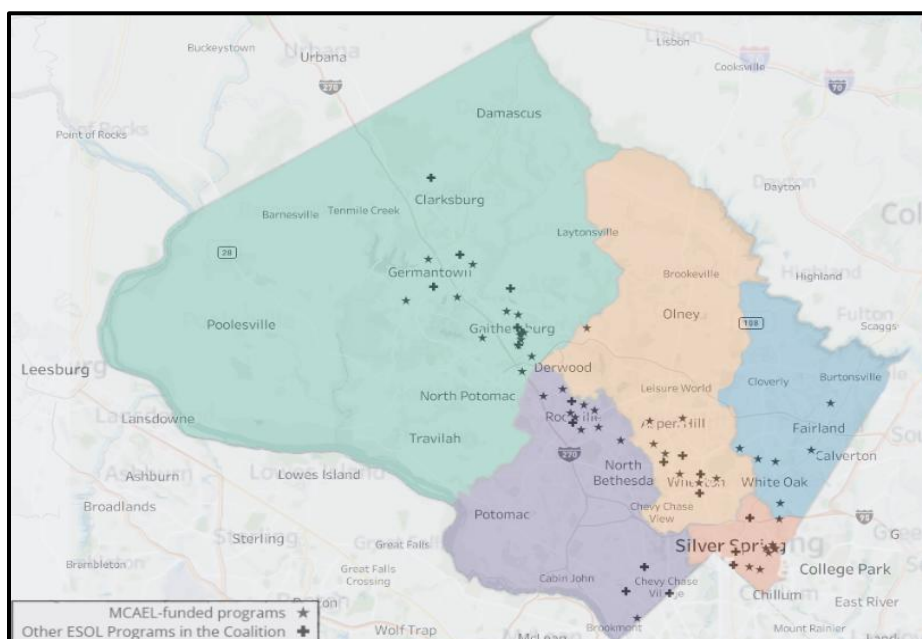
Figure 4. Map of in-person ESOL offerings by region. Courtesy of MCAEL.[10]

As Figure 4 illustrates, the in-person ESOL classes are largely concentrated around the Silver Spring, Wheaton, Rockville, and Gaithersburg areas. The distribution of the class sites by region can be found in Figure 5.

Regional Service Center Area	Number of In-Person ESOL Providers
Up-County	20
Bethesda Chevy Chase	15
Mid-County	12
Silver Spring	10
Eastern Montgomery	6

Figure 5. Distribution of in-person ESOL offerings by region.

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[10] "Adult English Learning in Montgomery County 2023-24: A Presentation of MCAEL Coalition Data." Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy. https://www.mcael.org/storymap.

While the Up-County region does have the largest number of in-person classes, they are concentrated around Gaithersburg and Germantown, leaving gaps in the outer areas of the region. Additionally, East-County has the fewest number of offerings, and they are largely concentrated near one another in the Southwestern area of the region.

Limited English Proficiency by Region

The concern about the Up-County and East-County regions is amplified when considering the high level of need for ESOL classes in contrast to the other regions. As Figures 6 and 7 illustrate, both Up-County and East-County are home to the largest proportion of census tracts where more than 10 percent of the population has Limited English Proficiency. This is especially concerning when noting that East-County also has the lowest number of in-person ESOL providers, and that Up-County's offerings are almost entirely concentrated in two areas.
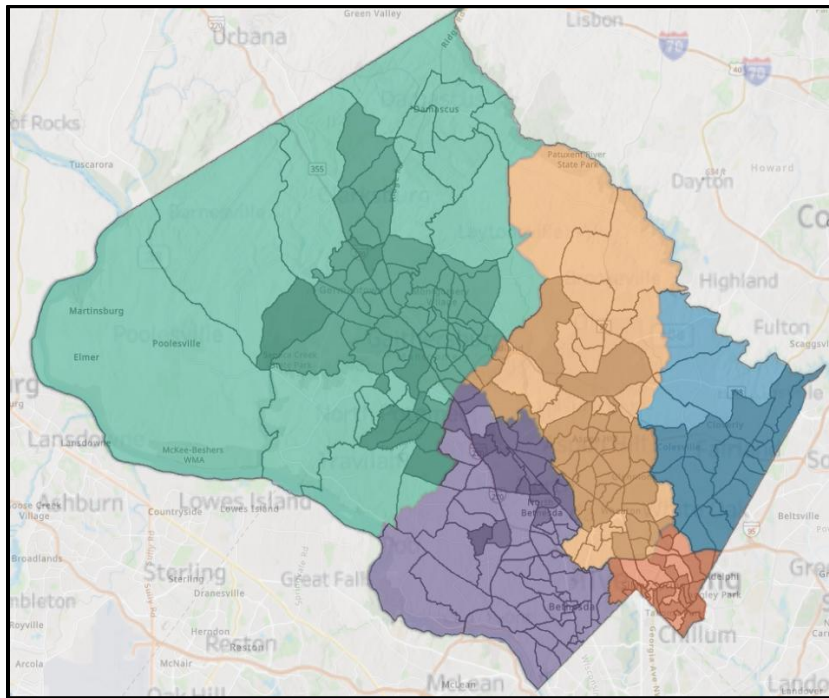
Figure 6. Census tracts where more than 10 percent of the population above the age of 5 has Limited English Proficiency. The darkened areas represent these "high need areas". Courtesy of Montgomery Planning, Research & Strategic Projects. [11]

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[11] "Languages Spoken in Montgomery County, MD." Montgomery Planning, Research & Strategic Projects. https://mcplanning.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=b3e00bb9e77447a7a2bc63cf972dd8eb.

Regional Service Center Area	Percentage of Areas with High Need in the Region
Eastern Montgomery	85
Up-County	75.949
Silver Spring	64.286
Mid-County	60.714
Bethesda Chevy Chase	30.645
Note: "High Need Area" refers to Census Tracts where more than 10 percent of the population over the age of has Limited English Proficiency.	

Figure 7. Limited English Proficiency by region. The percentage areas with high need were calculated by dividing the number of high need areas by the total number of census tracts in each region.

Efforts to Increase Accessibility

Providers of ESOL classes have already made changes to ensure that residents in Up-County and East-County are able to access these resources. According to MCAEL's executive board, the body within the organization that evaluates grant proposals prioritizes funding ESOL providers in these areas. While this has helped to support the providers in Up-County and East-County, there are simply fewer providers to fund in these areas than there are in the Bethesda, Silver Spring, and Mid-County regions. To address this discrepancy, MCAEL began the Community Learning Group (CLG) Program in 2021. Organizations that host these groups are most often local businesses and places of worship that already have strong ties to community members. In the four years since the program began, 10 CLGs class sites have been established, 17 partner organizations have been identified, and 37 classes have been offered. This program has served 204 learners, and 23 instructors have been trained. As illustrated in Figure 8, three of these sites are in the Up-County region and four are in the East-County region.
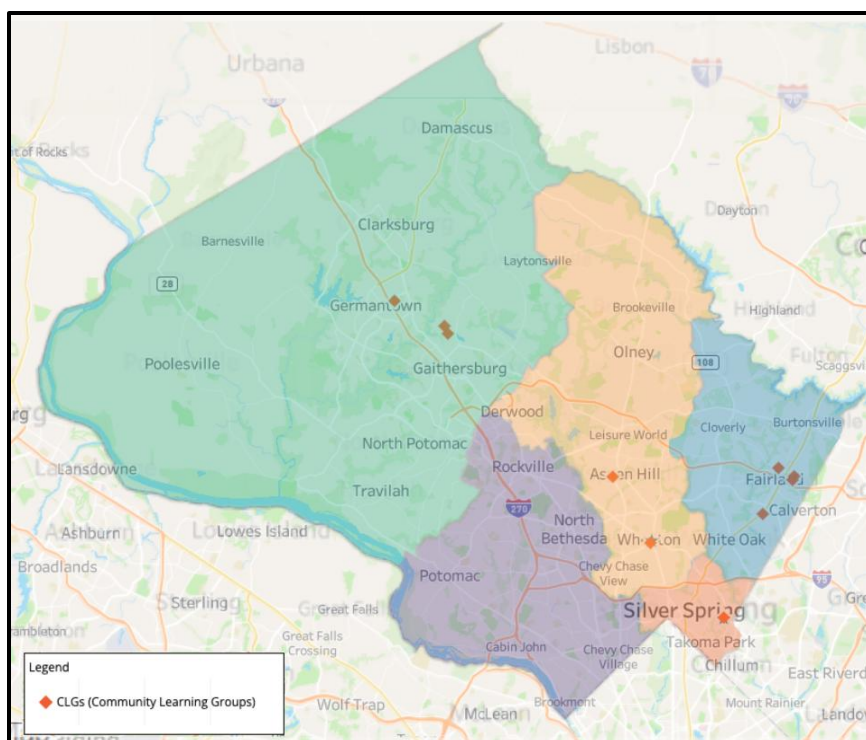
Figure 8. Distribution of Community Learning Groups by region. Courtesy of MCAEL. [12]

CLG class sites are chosen based upon MCAEL's Equity Focus Areas, which were modeled after the Montgomery Planning Department's geographical analysis of the same name. These areas were identified by calculating the number of low-income households, residents with Limited English Proficiency, and people of color in each census tract.[13] To better serve MCAEL's purposes, some Equity Focus Areas were included based solely on the high concentration of individuals with Limited English Proficiency.

One especially successful CLG was started by Rodrigue Vital, who currently serves as the Caribbean American Liaison for the Caribbean American Advisory Group. In the fall of 2023, Mr. Vital observed an increased need for ESOL classes, especially amongst the large group of individuals who had recently immigrated to Montgomery County from Haiti. Given the concentration of this community in the East-County region, they were located further from existing offerings. In order to meet this need, Mr. Vital and the Haitian

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[12] "Adult English Learning in Montgomery County 2023-24: A Presentation of MCAEL Coalition Data." Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy. https://www.mcael.org/storymap.
[13] "MCAEL Equity Focus Areas." Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy. https://www.mcael.org/EquityFocusAreas.

Resettlement Working Group collaborated with MCAEL to organize a Community Learning Group.

Figure 9. Photos from various meetings of the Community Learning Group organized by Rodrigue Vital and MCAEL. Photos courtesy of Rodrigue Vital.

He also recruited community members who speak primarily speak English or have already taken ESOL classes to serve as the instructors for the class. Originally, the ESOL class launched at a local church in Burtonsville, however had to later be moved to the East-County Regional Service Center to accommodate the large number of attendees. This pilot program was extremely popular amongst residents, and resulted in nearly 30 class meetings, where more than 50 residents received instruction. The largest groups represented in these classes were residents who had recently immigrated from West

Africa, Latin America, and Haiti. This success can demonstrate the importance of dedicated outreach to communities that are currently less able to access ESOL services.

CLGs have been instrumental in increasing the reach of ESOL programs, however the Executive Board explained that the change that was most effective in improving geographic accessibility was the introduction of classes that meet via Zoom. These online classes also began in 2021, in response to COVID-19 lockdowns. Online ESOL classes have greatly increased participation from residents in the Up-County and East-County regions, as well as female residents who may be taking care of children. The details of these Zoom classes, and the efforts to ensure that all residents were able to attend them will be discussed in the "Technological Accessibility" section.

The CLG program and the inclusion of online classes has been effective in steadily increasing learner participation in all regions of the County, however East-County continues to witness the lowest share of MCAEL's learners, as is demonstrated by Figures 10 and 11.

Regional Service Center Area	Increase in Number of MCAEL Learners Following the Introduction of CLGs and Online Classes
Up-County	2,203
Silver Spring	606
Bethesda Chevy Chase	474
Mid-County	460
Eastern Montgomery	360
Total	4,103

Figure 10. Increase in the number of learners that received ESOL instruction from 2021 to 2024. Data courtesy of MCAEL.

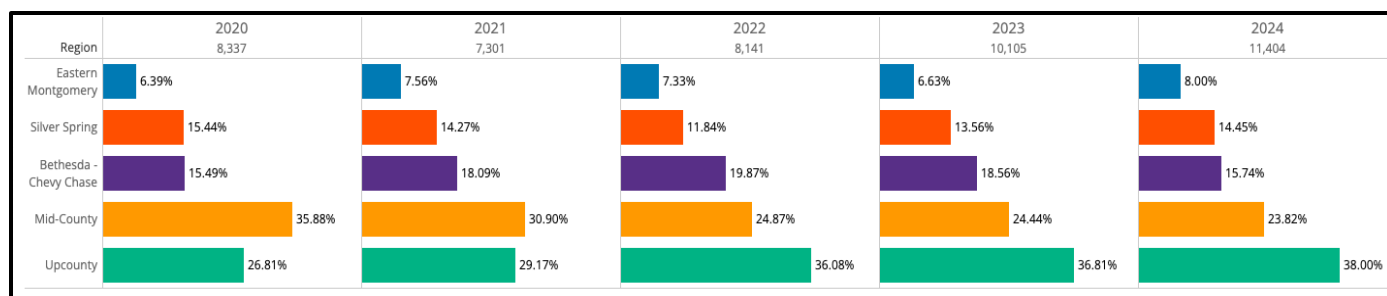| Region	2020 8,337	2021 7,301	2022 8,141	2023 10,105	2024 11,404
Eastern Montgomery	6.39%	7.56%	7.33%	6.63%	8.00%
Silver Spring	15.44%	14.27%	11.84%	13.56%	14.45%
Bethesda - Chevy Chase	15.49%	18.09%	19.87%	18.56%	15.74%
Mid-County	35.88%	30.90%	24.87%	24.44%	23.82%
Upcounty	26.81%	29.17%	36.08%	36.81%	38.00%

Figure 11. Share of ESOL learners by region from 2020 to 2024. Courtesy of MCAEL.[14]

In addition to the raw number of learners, MCAEL's progress in expanding geographic accessibility can also be understood by considering how many individuals with Limited English Proficiency attended classes. Figure 12 demonstrates the improvements that MCAEL has made just in the last year. These maps were created by comparing how many adult learners attended classes to the total number of adults in each zip code with Limited English proficiency. The darker an area is on the maps, the more successful MCAEL has been in reaching learners with Limited English Proficiency.
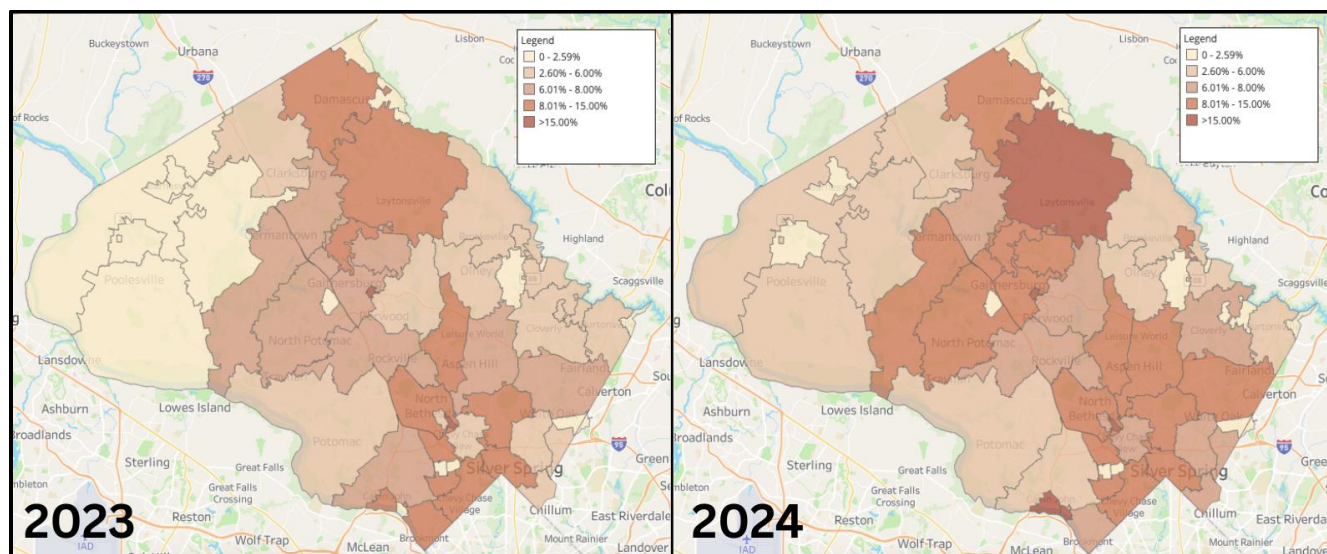
Figure 12. Change in percentage of adults with Limited English Proficiency that accessed MCAEL classes from 2023 to 2024. Courtesy of MCAEL.[15]

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[14] "Learners by Region." Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy.
https://public.tableau.com/views/FY24LearnerbyRegion/LearnersbyRegion?%3AshowVizHome=no.

[15] "Percentage of Adults with Limited English Proficiency That Accessed Classes." Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy.
https://public.tableau.com/views/FY24LearnerServedbyZipCode/LearnersServed?%3AshowVizHome=no.

While MCAEL has already made changes to improve the geographic accessibility of their programs, additional improvements are also planned for specific organizations within the coalition. For example, the Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center is working to expand their in-person offerings by adding ESOL classes at their Gaithersburg headquarters this fall. They will also be adding additional conversation classes at the Gaithersburg library.

Technological Accessibility

While geographic accessibility is a central concern of ESOL providers and learners alike, proximity to in-person classes is not the only barrier that potential participants face. Access to a computer and reliable internet is important for learners hoping to take advantage of the County's ESOL offerings, from becoming aware of these classes to actively participating in them. While the addition of online classes has been instrumental in including more learners that may not have the ability to travel to in-person meetings, it also raises concerns about the economic accessibility of the necessary technology. Additionally, residents that are unfamiliar with how to use Zoom and navigate different providers' websites often struggle to access classes. This issue is even more severe for those with the lowest level of English proficiency, which is why MCAEL's executive board expressed that amidst the overall increase in learners when Zoom classes were introduced, there was a decrease in the amount of Beginner Level learners being served. Many ESOL providers in the coalition, including the Gilchrist Center, also offer computer literacy classes, however these can only be accessed by completing online registration.

While computer and internet access are vital for learners to be able to attend online classes, access to this technology is also important to enroll in these classes in the first place. MCAEL Communications Director Emma Starr explained that there are three ways that potential learners can access information about ESOL offerings, two of which are on the MCAEL website. One online resource is the Program Directory, which learners may use to search for offerings based upon their preferred price range, location, and English level. Another resource is the Class List, which includes a comprehensive document that catalogs the various ESOL offerings that are taking place each term. The Class List is

available online; however, it is also printed out and distributed across community organizations including County Resource Centers, places of worship, and public libraries. The Gilchrist Center also disseminates information about their ESOL offerings through flyers in public spaces; however, its main form of advertising is through its website. Potential learners also have the option to sign up for email and text updates about class registration. Additionally, the majority of ESOL offerings require learners to complete online registration, and to take an online placement test to determine the appropriate level of English instruction.

MCAEL Director of Programs Rudi Jeung explained that soon after Zoom classes launched, the coalition partnered with the MontgommeryConnects program to provide laptops to learners. The MontgomeryConnects Program operates through the Office of Broadband Programs and Department of Technology and Enterprise Business Solutions (TEBS) and provides broadband internet to rural homes and affordable housing developments as well as digital literacy classes for senior residents. Previously, the program also provided free laptops to Montgomery County residents through the Computer4You initiative. The Initiative collaborated with MCAEL in 2023 to distribute 400 free laptops that could be used for ESOL online classes. At this distribution event, learners were also given lessons on how to download and log into Zoom.[16] The portion of the program that provided free laptops has since ended, however residents that have already received laptops have been able to retain them. [17]

The Computer4You initiative ran from May 2022 to August 2024. During this time, a total of 117,000 laptops were distributed to County residents that did not previously have access to a computer in their home, according to Montgomery Connects Program Director Mitsuko Herrera. Interested residents were required to fill out an application, then attend one of the program's 419 distribution events. At these events, individuals received their

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[16] Stevens, Kathy. "The Trio Every Learner Needs for Online Learning." Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy, July 25, 2025. https://www.mcael.org/blog/the-trio-every-learner-needs.
[17] "Montgomery Connect." Office of Broadband Programs | Services. https://montgomerycountymd.gov/obp/computer-for-you.html.

laptop, as well as the opportunity to receive training in how to use the laptop, send emails and download applications. The Computer4You initiative was supported by a variety of federal and state grants, most notably the Emergency Connectivity Fund, which contributed the funds to provide 100,000 laptops in response to COVID-19 shutdowns. At the same time, the larger MontgomeryConnects Program was able to provide free internet installation to low-income residents that were enrolled in Medicaid and SNAP.

MCAEL's Executive Board explained that this program was instrumental in growing the number of learners that have been able to access online ESOL classes. During the time that the program was active, MCAEL assisted in outreach by informing their ESOL students about the opportunity. Residents for whom English is not their first language benefitted greatly from the computers secured by the Emergency Connectivity Fund, with 52 percent of the computers being distributed to such households, according to Montgomery Connects Program Director Mitsuko Herrera. Within this figure, 31 percent of households primarily speak Spanish, 8 percent primarily speak Amharic or French, 4 percent primarily speak Mandarin/Cantonese, Vietnamese, or Korean, and 9 percent speak a language that was not listed.

Once the existing grant funding was used in full, the initiative received an additional $11 million in federal funding under the Digital Equity Act and $13 million from the State Digital Equity Planning and Capacity Grant program, however both were canceled by the Trump administration in May of this year. As a result, the Computer4You initiative has been inactive since August of 2024.

Economic Accessibility

Technological accessibility is closely connected to the larger issue of economic accessibility, which MCAEL and its partners are also working to improve within their offerings. ESOL classes within the coalition vary greatly in cost depending on the level of instruction, structure of classes, and frequency of meeting times. According to MCAEL's current Program Directory, twenty ESOL providers offer free classes, and five providers offer classes that cost 25 dollars or less. Additionally, eight providers offer classes that

cost between 25 and 50 dollars, and three providers offer classes that cost between 50 and 100 dollars. Finally, four providers charge over 100 dollars in tuition, with the highest cost being 740 dollars for an intensive English program. The classes that are free or low-cost are very popular, leading to learners often being unable to register for those that are most plausible for them. Gilchrist Center Manager Julien Labiche explained that the classes they provide often reach capacity within an hour of the registration links becoming available. As a result, he shared that the Center very frequently receives requests to expand their free and low-cost offerings.

In addition to the tuition and textbook fees associated with ESOL classes, the ability for full and part-time workers to attend classes is also an issue. The MCAEL Executive Board explained that many of their learners, especially those that come from low-income households, work one or multiple part-time jobs where their schedule shifts depending upon the specific week. This is an issue for their participation in ESOL classes, which meet weekly or bi-weekly and require consistent attendance. The majority of ESOL classes meet on weeknights or during the day on weekends, which may be more amenable to learners working full-time, however it does leave learners that are also parents with the issue of securing reliable childcare. The grants that MCAEL offers to ESOL providers may be used to fund free or low-cost childcare for learners, and nine providers now offer this service during in-person classes. While this is an important improvement, the Executive Board still identifies lack of reliable and affordable childcare as a barrier for many potential learners.

The majority of ESOL providers are currently located in areas where there are a considerable number of low-income households, however some low-income areas continue to be located considerably further from these in-person offerings. Figure 13 demonstrates where these classes are in comparison to how many low-income households are in each census tract. To calculate these areas, MCAEL used the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy data to identify households that earn up to 80 percent of the area's median family

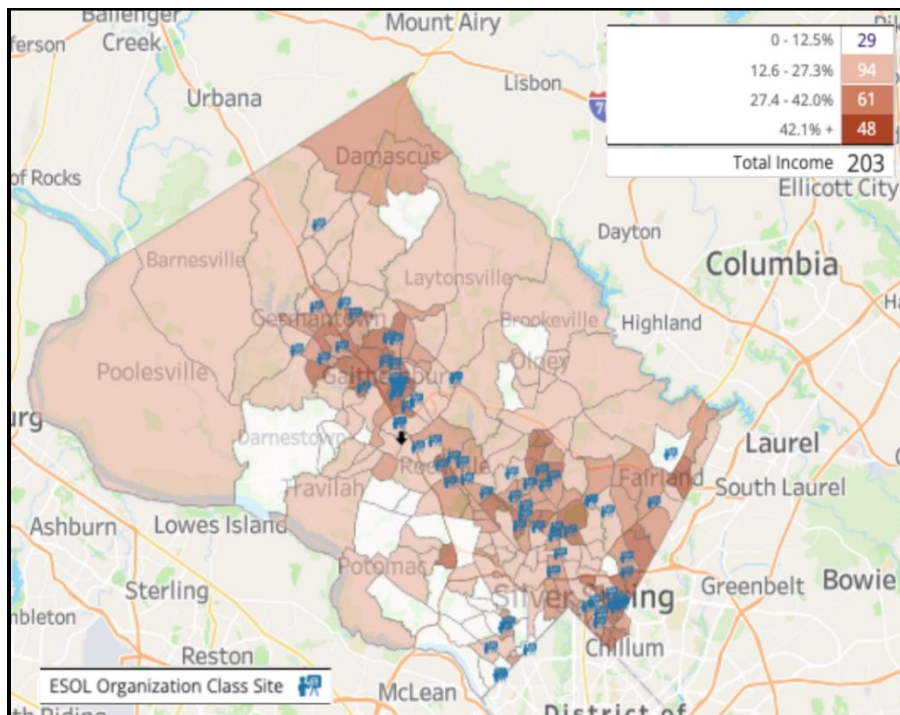income. The different shades of red indicate the percentage of households in each census tract that are low-income.[18]

Figure 13. Share of low-income households by census tract and locations of in-person ESOL offerings. Courtesy of MCAEL.

One's income status can also greatly impact their ability to access reliable transportation that would allow them to attend regular classes. The funds allocated by MCAEL grants can be used to provide transportation support for learners, however only one ESOL provider currently offers such support. Public transit offerings are greatly helpful in providing transportation, however these offerings are not equally convenient for all potential ESOL learners. Gilchrist Center Manager Julien Labiche explained that classes that take place at private organizations often are unable to be accessed via the County bus system. For example, the Chinese Culture and Community Service Center, which offers Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced classes, is approximately half of a mile from the

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[18] "MCAEL Equity Focus Areas." Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy. https://www.mcael.org/EquityFocusAreas.

nearest bus stop. While this may still be a plausible option for those who hope to travel to these classes, this distance may remain a barrier for senior or disabled learners.

Barriers to Expanding Offerings

While the introduction of Zoom classes and Community Learning Groups has greatly increased the accessibility of ESOL classes, barriers persist and keep MCAEL from expanding their offerings even more. Gilchrist Center Manager Juien Labiche and the MCAEL Executive Board agreed that one of the largest barriers to expanding ESOL offerings is the limited number of instructors. MCAEL offers free training and professional development classes to individuals that have interest in becoming an ESOL instructor, however they continuously struggle to find individuals that want to pursue this path.

One aspect of the instructor position that the Board perceives as a disincentive is the low pay that they receive. The current group of instructors is not as diverse as the Executive Board would have hoped, with 75 percent of them being over the age of 50, and 60 percent being over the age of 60. The majority are also native-born English speakers who may not speak the primary languages of the students they are teaching. MCAEL's Executive Board shared that creating a strategic recruiting campaign for instructors has been a goal for some time, however the small staff that they have does not currently have the bandwidth to do so.

Employing a diverse pool of instructors is important to making potential learners feel welcome in ESOL classes. Yi Shen, who currently serves as the Asian American Liaison, also explained that many of the residents he represents perceive government services as untrustworthy and detached from their interests. There is also widespread shame about asking for help in any capacity, especially from others with whom they are not familiar. These barriers to soliciting services such as ESOL instruction are especially prevalent for residents that have recently immigrated to Montgomery County. According to Mr. Shen, 78 percent of the Asian American population in Montgomery County is foreign-born, and a large portion of these individuals immigrated from areas with oppressive governments that targeted individuals that used certain government services. Employing

instructors that share cultural and linguistic backgrounds with ESOL learners is important in building trust between providers and the communities they hope to serve.

Instructors can also be instrumental in recruiting new ESOL students and ensuring that these classes are as effective as possible. Mr. Vital explained that recruiting instructors from within the Caribbean-American community was integral to the success of his pilot program, as they were able to use their existing connections to identify peers that would benefit from ESOL instruction. In the case of the residents served by Mr. Shen, instructors with shared backgrounds would also understand the apprehensions that potential learners hold, and work to change their perceptions of these services. For individuals in all communities that have Limited English Proficiency, learning from an instructor that also speaks their primary language can also assist in the learning process.

Another barrier to geographic expansion of classes that was shared by both the MCAEL Executive Board and Gilchrist Center Manger Julien Labiche is the lack of spaces where classes may be held. Mr. Vital was able to overcome this barrier by reaching out to community spaces that he knew were well-connected to the Caribbean American population. His intimate knowledge of the community in need of ESOL instruction allowed him to think creatively to find locations with the capacity to hold classes, and where potential learners would feel welcomed.

Insights from Other Jurisdictions

Montgomery County may learn how to best serve their population of potential ESOL learners by understanding how other jurisdictions with rich linguistic diversity provide English classes. The jurisdictions chosen have populations that are similar in size and linguistic composition to Montgomery County. The overall population of Montgomery County is 1,062,061, and 43.4 percent of this population primarily speaks a language other than English. Spanish is the next most common primary language, representing 17.7 percent of the population. Residents who primarily speak other Indo-European languages

represent 10.8 percent of the population, and those who primarily speak Asian and Pacific Island languages make up 9.4 percent of the population.[19]

Contra Costa County, California

The overall population of Contra Costa County is 1,165, 927, and 38.8 percent of the population primarily speaks a language other than English. Spanish is the next most common primary language, representing 19.7 percent of the population. Additionally, residents for whom Asian and Pacific Island languages are their primary language make up 10.7 percent of the population, and other Indo-European Languages are the primary language for 7.5 percent of the residents of Contra Costa County.[20]

In order to support this linguistically diverse population, there are a wide variety of providers that offer adult ESOL classes in Contra Costa County. These providers are coordinated by the Contra Costa County Adult Education Consortium (CCCAEC), and much like MCAEL, this organization works to support these providers and expand their reach within the county. The ESOL providers that are a part of CCCAEC are existing educational institutions that have extended their offerings to adult community members. Seven of the ten organizations within the consortium are "Adult Education Centers", which are run by established school districts. The remaining three providers are community colleges which provide ESOL classes to their students for credit, but also to non-students.[21]

The majority of ESOL classes take place in-person, however there are also online options when an enrollment minimum is met. Every class provided by these organizations is free to community members. In the past year, organizations within the CCCAEC coalition served 9,510 ESOL students.[22] CCCAEC is led by the Consortium Steering Committee, which is composed of representatives from each of the educational service

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[19] US Census Bureau. "American Community Survey Data - Montgomery County Maryland." Census.gov, July 31, 2024. https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html.
[20] US Census Bureau. "American Community Survey Data - Contra Costa County California." https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/contracostacountycalifornia.
[21] "Schools." Contra Costa County Adult Education Consortium. https://www.cccaec.us/schools.html.
[22] "CCCAEC Three-Year-PLAN-2025-28." Contra Costa County Adult Education Consortium. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hQbJrP3En26sbKDamnhe-XGv1b829wnl/view.

providers. This committee meets monthly to allocate funding, share updates from their respective organizations, and plan improvements that facilitate further data and resource sharing. Aside from the classes provided under CCCAEC, residents may also access online language courses such as Rosetta Stone and Mango Languages, as well as individual tutoring with trained volunteers by obtaining a library card.[23]

Fairfax County, Virginia

Fairfax County in Virginia has a total population of 1,150,309, 39.9 percent of which primarily speaks a language other than English. Spanish is the next most common language, with 13.9 percent of the population primarily speaking it at home. Asian and Pacific Island languages are the next most common primary languages, representing 11.4 percent. Other Indo-European languages are primarily spoken by 9.9 percent of the population.[24]

ESOL classes are provided by a variety of public, private, nonprofit, and faith-based organizations. Unlike Montgomery County and County Contra Costa County, there is no coordinating agency for all of these providers. With that said, many of the state's public providers operate as partners for NOVARAE (Northern Virginia Regional Adult Education), which is a coalition creation by the Virginia Department of Education. NOVARAE includes public school districts in the Northern Virginia region as well as a select few faith-based and nonprofit organizations. Fairfax County Public Schools is a part of this coalition, and this agency offers in-person ESOL classes for Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced English speakers. Another NOVARAE partner is the English Empowerment Center, which provides a variety of in-person and online classes for adult learners, including Beginner English classes.[25]

There are also government ESOL providers that operate independently from NOVARAE. The Neighborhood and Community Services agency is a part of the Fairfax

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[23] "Adult English Language Learners." Contra Costa County Library. https://ccclib.org/aell/.

[24] US Census Bureau. "American Community Survey Data - Fairfax County Virginia." 2025. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/fairfaxcountyvirginia/PST045224.

[25] "About Us." Northern Virginia Regional Adult Education. https://www.novarae.org/about.

County Department of Health and Human Services, and they currently offer online ESOL conversation classes for speakers of any proficiency level. The County's libraries also offer English Conversation groups, where individuals who have Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced Proficiency may come together to practice what they have learned in structured ESOL classes. Learners may also register for individual practice sessions with a library volunteer, and both opportunities are available at most of the County's 22 library locations.[26]

Fresno County, California

Fresno County in California has a total population of 1,008,654, and 43 percent of its residents primarily speak a language other than English. Spanish is by far the next most common primary language, representing 32.5 percent of the population. Asian and Pacific Island languages are primarily spoken by 5.7 percent of the population, and other Indo-European languages represent 4.0 percent of the population.[27]

The main provider of ESOL services is the Fresno Adult School, which operates as part of the Fresno Unified School District. These classes take place both online and in-person, and often also include specific language lessons that prepare learners to take the U.S. Citizenship Exam.[28] Additionally, the Central Unified School District provides in-person ESOL classes for Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced learners through the Central Learning Adult/Alternative School Site.[29] The Fresno County Public Library offers individual tutoring for ESOL learners, which may take place on Zoom or in-person. The library also holds Conversation Circles, which are facilitated by trained volunteers and allow groups of up to 8 individuals to practice their English skills.[30]

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[26] "English and World Language Conversation Groups." Fairfax County Virginia. https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branch-out/conversation-groups.

[27] US Census Bureau. "American Community Survey Data - Fresno County California." https://data.census.gov/table?t=Language+Spoken+at+Home&g=050XX00US06019.

[28] "English as a Second Language." Fresno Adult School. https://www.fas.edu/english-as-a-second-language/.

[29] "English as a Second Language." Central Learning Adult/Alternative School Site. https://cl.centralunified.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=746218&type=d&pREC_ID=2417657.

[30] Library, Fresno County Public. "Adult and Family Literacy Services." Fresno County Public Library. https://www.fresnolibrary.org/literacy/.

Local colleges also serve as ESOL providers, with both Fresno State University and Fresno City college offering classes. Fresno State University has the American English Institute, which specifically tailors its lessons to help speakers of other languages gain the proficiency needed to study at an American college or university.[31] This program does not offer Beginner-level ESOL classes. Fresno City College offers Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced ESOL classes to its students for credit, or to community members for free. These classes take place over Zoom, on the college's campus, or at community centers such as the Sikh Institute of Fresno.[32]

Key Takeaways

Montgomery County currently engages in some of the most successful practices utilized by jurisdictions with similar populations and linguistic diversity. Specifically, the participation of local colleges and collaboration with private and nonprofit providers. With this said, it does appear that collaborating with other educational providers and increasing programming at public libraries could build upon the success that MCAEL has achieved and ensure that their resources are more evenly distributed throughout the County. Their Community Learning Group Program was formed with the intention of expanding offerings through partnering with organizations that do not provide ESOL classes but could hold less structured group sessions. The County Council should support actions that allow the CLG Program to reach as many possible providers and learners as possible, and the suggested strategies for doing so can be found in the following section.

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[31] "Continuing and Global Education." American English Institute - Fresno State University. https://cge.fresnostate.edu/aei/index.html.

[32] "English for Multilingual Students." Fresno City College. https://www.fresnocitycollege.edu/student-services/programs/adult-edu/emls.html.

Policy Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Creation of an ESOL Outreach Committee within the Office of Community Partnerships and the Community Engagement Cluster in collaboration with MCAEL.

The success of the Community Learning Group spearheaded by Mr. Vital demonstrates the value of a partnership between the Advisory Groups within the Community Engagement Cluster and the Office of Community Partnerships and MCAEL. Mr. Vital said that the support and resources offered by MCAEL were integral to the success of this pilot program, as the Advisory Group does not have independent access to ESOL Resources. As previously discussed, MCAEL also has identified a need for increased outreach, but faces limitations in what they are able to do as a sole organization. Collaboration between these community leaders and MCAEL would bridge both gaps and allow for the coalition's resources to be shared by those who already have connections and a vested interest in their communities.

The committee should be comprised of the leader of each Advisory Group, as well as three members of the MCAEL Executive Board. The MCAEL Executive Board includes the Executive Director, Director of Finance and Operations, and Director of Programs. Their other staff includes the Programs Manager, Community Learning Group Coordinator, Manager of Network Learning and Development, Digital Communications and Design Strategist, and the Manager of Data Analysis and Technology. While any member of the MCAEL staff would provide invaluable experience to the ESOL Outreach Committee, it would be most effective to include at least one member of the Executive Board, as well as a communications and programs professional.

The creation of an ESOL Outreach Committee would provide an additional mechanism for MCAEL to hear from the communities it serves, and gain feedback from those that are most intimately familiar with their needs. This committee should meet monthly, and each meeting should give each representative from the advisory groups an opportunity to share feedback about how current ESOL offerings are serving their

community, including any possible barriers they may be facing. This reporting will help MCAEL identify specific areas where their current outreach efforts may be improved. With these issues identified, the Advisory Group leaders and MCAEL staff can use their respective knowledge of the different linguistic communities and ESOL offerings to create more effective outreach campaigns and learner events.

This collaboration would allow other Advisory Groups to hold specific Community Learning Groups such as the one piloted by Mr. Vital, increasing the reach of MCAEL's resources in environments where learners can feel the most comfortable. While the CLG model is one that could be successful for every linguistic group, planning such events would not be the sole focus of the committee. Other outreach events, such as ESOL information sessions for potential learners, could also improve the reach of these classes. Additionally, the ESOL Outreach Committee should spearhead a recruiting program for possible instructors. Given MCAEL's difficulties in creating a diverse pool of instructors, the leader of Advisory Groups may use their familiarity with the communities they serve to work with residents that may be interested in teaching. This program could include ESOL instructor information and interest events, which should be held online but also in locations that are well-connected to their respective communities.

Recommendation 2. Increased funding to the Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions to revive the Montgomery Connects Computer4You initiative.

As shown in Figures 10, 11, and 12, the inclusion of online ESOL classes contributed to a sizable increase in the number of learners in all regions of the County. According to MCAEL's Executive Board, this change was the single most impactful action they have taken towards increasing the geographic accessibility of classes, especially in the Up-County and East-County regions. The Computer4You initiative was instrumental in these efforts, as it allowed low-income residents who do not have their own laptop or wi-fi to access these classes. The basic computer training held at each distribution event also helped individuals unfamiliar with Zoom and email gain important digital literacy skills.

While this initiative was incredibly successful in expanding the geographic and technological accessibility of ESOL classes, there remain inequities between regions and linguistic groups in the County in which residents are most able to access these resources.

According to Montgomery Connects Program Director Mitsuko Herrera, the initiative was set to continue, however the cancellation of their most recent grants halted the distribution efforts altogether. Increasing funding for the Department of Technology & Enterprise Business Solutions would allow them to revive this initiative and continue to work towards achieving equity in who may access ESOL classes. Given the County's budgeting constraints relative to the funding capabilities of the Federal Government and Maryland State Government, a new iteration of this program could operate as a laptop loan program, where residents are required to return the devices after a certain amount of time. This would allow a smaller number of laptops to be purchased while serving many of those in need.

Given that the average length of an ESOL class term is approximately 8-16 weeks, this loan period could last for 6 months at a time. To ensure that all residents in need can access these services equally, there should be a tracking system for which residents have recently received a laptop, and priority should be given to those who have yet to benefit from this distribution. This iteration of the program must also include the in-person distribution events with computer literacy workshops, so that individuals are able to use their devices to access classes.

Alternate Recommendation – Increased support to create a specific partnership between the Computer4You initiative and MCAEL.

While all Montgomery County residents deserve access to a computer if they do not own one, creating a specific distribution program for ESOL learners would ensure that potential learners, specifically those in the Up-County and East-County regions would be able to access these classes at a lower cost to the County.

Recommendation 3. Increased funding for MCAEL to advertise instructor positions and increase pay for instructors.

While the ESOL Outreach Committee could be instrumental in connecting possible instructors with MCAEL opportunities, increased funding would increase the efficacy of these efforts. As previously discussed, insufficient instructors were identified by MCAEL's Executive Board and Gilchrist Center Manager Julien Labiche as one of the foremost barriers to increasing ESOL offerings. MCAEL currently offers ample free professional development opportunities for individuals interested in becoming instructors, however they have struggled to identify residents that are interested in filling this role.

MCAEL does not currently advertise these positions on job websites such as LinkedIn, Indeed, or ZipRecruiter. Increased funding would allow the organization to post multiple jobs at a time and promote them to those searching for instructor positions in the area. Given the prevalence of online ESOL classes, instructors could be hired from other regions, and increased advertising efforts would allow a much wider range of candidates to view these opportunities. There are also a variety of publications and radio stations that primarily serve the diverse linguistic and ethnic populations in the DMV area and advertising the instructor position through these channels would assist in the efforts to create a diverse pool of instructors. Specifically, there are radio stations that program in Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, and Mandarin and allow organizations to buy advertisements. Additionally, publications such as the Washington Hispanic, Chinese in DC, Korea Daily, and The World Journal, allow for paid advertisements.

In addition to increasing advertising efforts, MCAEL's Executive Board identified the current pay offered to instructors as a possible disincentive for individuals to apply. Instructors currently make $20 per hour of class time, which is often less than other part-time opportunities. By increasing funding, MCAEL would be able to increase the compensation offered for instructors to an amount that would allow individuals to pursue it over other part-time opportunities.

Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact

Limited English Proficiency by Linguistic Group

Making changes that would allow ESOL offerings to reach more potential learners is vital to ensuring that these classes are equitably serving all linguistic and ethnic groups in Montgomery County. Residents that primarily speak Spanish are currently the linguistic group with the largest number of learners in ESOL programs. As previously discussed, 8,295 residents who primarily speak Spanish were served by ESOL offerings in the past year. This figure represents approximately 67.286 percent of all the learners that attended classes. Residents who primarily speak other Indo-European languages, Asian and Pacific Island languages, and all other languages represent approximately 17.586 percent, 8.574 percent, and 6.554 percent of all learners, respectively. [33]
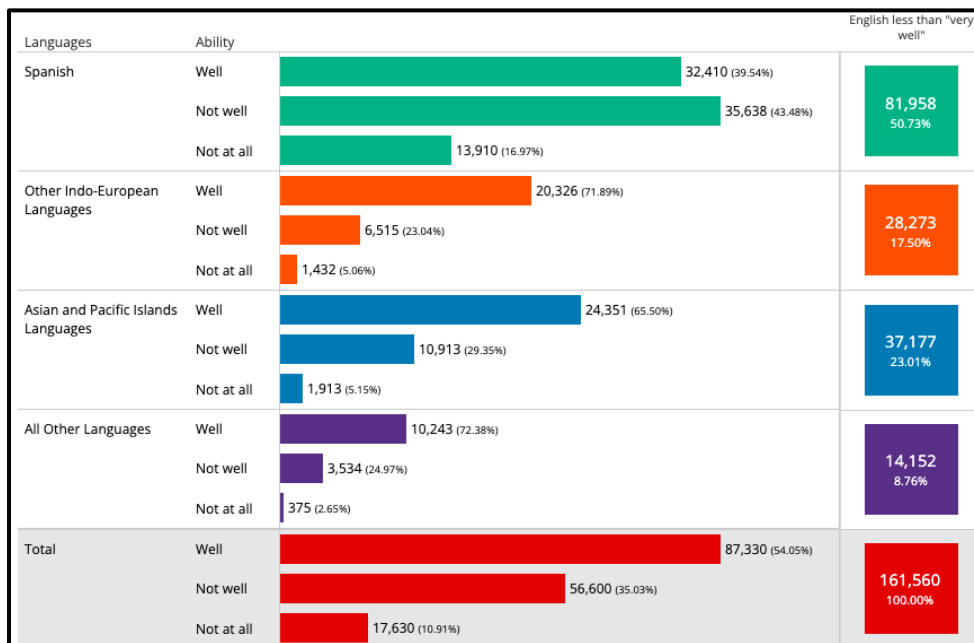

Figure 14. Distribution of residents with Limited English Proficiency by primary language group. Courtesy of MCAEL.

[33] "Adults Who Speak English Less than 'Very Well' Served by Language Group." Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy.
https://public.tableau.com/views/FY24LearnerServedbyCensusLanguages/LearnersServedbyLanguage2?%3AshowVizHome=no.

It is indeed the case that residents who primarily speak Spanish greatly outnumber residents who primarily speak other languages. According to 2023 U.S. Census data, 176,883 individuals speak Spanish at home, compared to 107,739 individuals for other Indo-European languages, 94,221 for Asian and Pacific Island Languages, and 54,464 for all other languages. As Figure 14 illustrates, residents who primarily speak Spanish represent the largest share of the overall population with Limited English Proficiency, making up 50.73 percent of this population. [34]

The Spanish-speaking population also demonstrates the highest need for ESOL instruction, with 46.335 percent of this group demonstrating Limited English Proficiency. Figure 15 also showcases the high levels of need in the other linguistic groups, most notably those for whom Asian and Pacific Island Languages are their primary language, with 39.457 of this population demonstrating Limited English Proficiency.

Primary Language Spoken	Percentage of Primary Speakers with Limited English Proficiency
Spanish	46.335
Asian and Pacific Island Languages	39.457
Other Indo-European Languages	26.424
All Other Languages	25.984

Figure 15. Share of population of each linguistic group with Limited English Proficiency. Data courtesy of the U.S. Census Bureau.[35]

This increased need is often concentrated into residential communities, as is demonstrated by Figure 16. Amongst the census tracts where at least 10 percent of the population speaks English less than "very well", Spanish is by far the most common primary language spoken.

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[34] US Census Bureau. "American Community Survey Data - Montgomery County Maryland." Census.gov, July 31, 2024. https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html.

[35] US Census Bureau. "American Community Survey Data - Montgomery County Maryland." Census.gov, July 31, 2024. https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html.
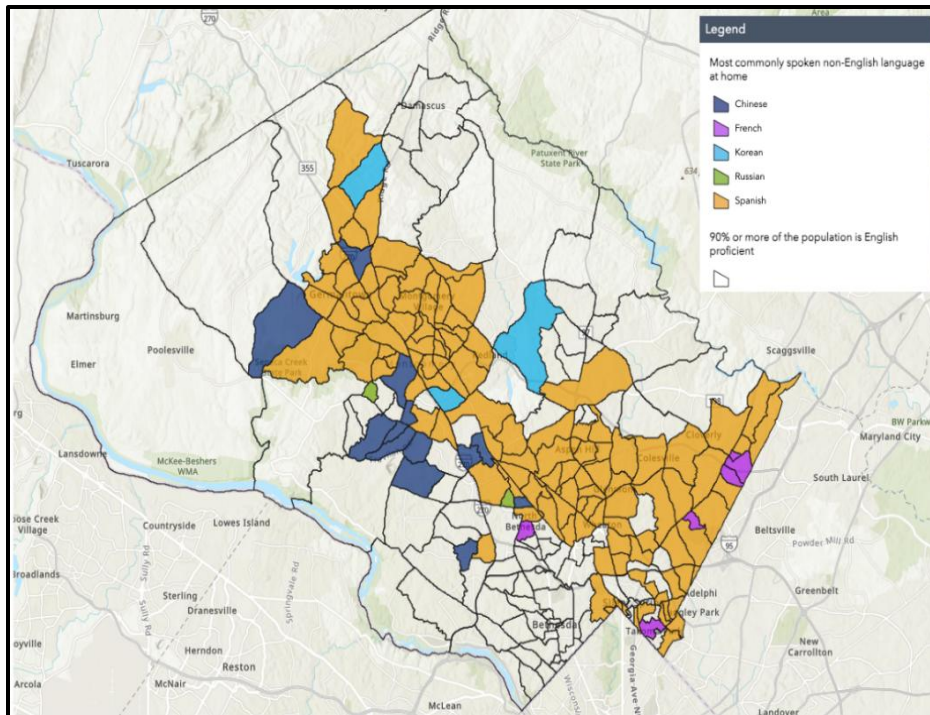
Figure 16. Census tracts where at least 10 percent of the population has demonstrated Limited English Proficiency, and which languages are most spoken. Courtesy of Montgomery Planning, Research & Strategic Projects.[36]

Inequities in Accessing ESOL Classes

Given the large size of the Spanish-speaking population compared to other linguistic groups, as well as the heightened need for ESOL classes amongst this population, it is no surprise that these learners make up the largest portion of ESOL participants. While this demonstrates success in pairing potential learners with necessary services, the gaps in participation between this linguistic group and the others are also indicative of how the accessibility issues disproportionately impact certain residents. Figure 17 showcases how the distribution of in-person ESOL offerings impacts different linguistic groups.

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[36] "Languages Spoken in Montgomery County, MD." Montgomery Planning, Research & Strategic Projects. https://mcplanning.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=b3e00bb9e77447a7a2bc63cf972dd8eb.
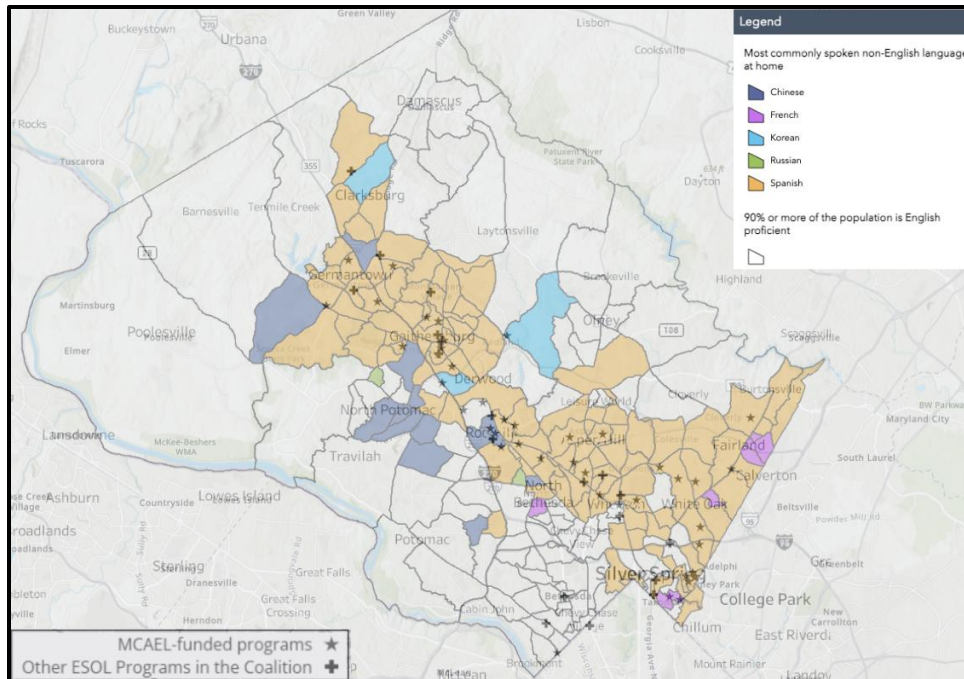
Figure 17. In-person ESOL offerings and the most common language spoken in each census tract where at least 10 percent of the population has demonstrated Limited English Proficiency. Courtesy of Montgomery Planning, Research & Strategic Projects and MCAEL.

Figure 17 underscores the importance of increasing geographic accessibility of ESOL classes, as the current gaps in programming disproportionately impact certain linguistic groups. Specifically, the large community of residents who primarily speak Chinese in the North Potomac area of Up-County and the surrounding areas currently need to travel to Rockville or Derwood to access these classes. Additionally, the French-speaking population is the largest in the East-County region, where there is the least number of ESOL classes.

Conclusion

While ESOL classes currently serve a large portion of the County's population that primarily speaks a different language and has Limited English Proficiency, barriers remain that keep certain groups from accessing these classes. Specifically, residents in the Up-County and East-County regions, as well as individuals who primarily speak Chinese and French are the most geographically separated from in-person ESOL offerings. While the introduction of Zoom classes and the Community Learning Group Program have made strides toward improving the geographic accessibility of these classes, these solutions

bring about separate barriers that the County Council must work to overcome. Zoom classes continue to be inaccessible to residents that do not have reliable access to a computer or internet, however providing support to revive the Computer4You Initiative would help bridge this gap.

Additionally, the Community Learning Group Program is limited by the small number of cooperating organizations that have been identified as sites for these classes. Both Zoom classes and Community Learning Groups also require instructors, which MCAEL has been unable to employ in large numbers. Supporting the creation of an ESOL Outreach Committee would allow individuals with intimate knowledge of diverse language groups to assist MCAEL in identifying hosts for Community Learning Groups, as well as increasing their general outreach efforts for all ESOL services. This committee could also help recruit instructors, and the Council should support MCAEL to allow them to increase the compensation for instructors and explore other avenues for advertising.

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