



**English**  
Empowerment Center  
Learn English. Change your life.

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



# Mission

The mission of the English Empowerment Center (EEC) is to teach adults the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English so they can access employment and educational opportunities and more fully and equitably participate in the community.

# Vision

A community empowered by the ability to read, write, speak, and understand English.



**Learner-Focus:** Keep our learners' best interests in mind



**Collaboration:** Recognize that by working together, we can do more to achieve common goals.



**Innovation:** Remain at the cutting edge of best practices and implement evidence-based programs that enhance learning.



**Excellence:** Strive to be the best at what we do.



**Integrity:** Be honest and sincere in all interactions.



**Respect:** Treat all persons with dignity and embrace and celebrate one another's differences and cultural backgrounds.

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# Letter from the Executive Director

Greetings,

As I reflect on the past year, I am deeply grateful for the dedication and commitment of everyone who makes the English Empowerment Center a place of learning, growth, and opportunity. 2024 has been a year of expansion and forward thinking, all in service of our mission, to teach adults the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking, and understand English so they can access employment and educational opportunities and more fully and equitably participate in the community.

Language is a powerful tool—it opens doors to employment, further education, community and civic engagement, and so much more. This year, we have continued our efforts to remove barriers to learning by introducing new class sites throughout Northern Virginia, ensuring that more adults have convenient access to high-quality English education. Additionally, EEC's online classes provide a flexible learning option for those live outside of Northern Virginia or are balancing work, family, and other commitments.

Our success is driven by the perseverance of our students, who bring determination and enthusiasm to their learning, and by the dedication of our teachers, volunteers, and supporters, whose efforts make this work possible. Their commitment reinforces what we know to be true: when adults gain confidence in their English skills, they are better equipped to advocate for themselves, support their families, and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on expanding access to education and deepening our impact. We are excited to continue developing new opportunities for learning and collaboration, ensuring that every adult who comes through our doors with the wish to learn English has the support they need to succeed.

Thank you for being part of this important work. Your belief in our mission makes all the difference, and together, we are building a more inclusive and empowered community.

With much appreciation,

*Roopal Saran*

Roopal Mehta Saran  
Executive Director



# Academic Programs

EEC served 2,200 adult learners in our online and in-person classes throughout Northern Virginia, including career-specific training programs and targeted skills development tailored to the students' needs. The English Empowerment Center is one of only a few non-profit organizations in Northern Virginia that complies with federal education standards as it serves the most beginning-level adult learner, those that understand English at a 6th grade level or lower.

**EEC's Beginning English Classes** teach the foundational skills adult English language learners need. Classes are held at least twice a week for two-hour class sessions at three academic levels.



Our **Family Learning Programs (FLP)** provide English language instruction classes for parents and caregivers, empowering them to engage in their children's education.

**Skills-based Classes** give learners the option of focusing exclusively on the specific skills needed to expand educational and vocational competencies, including Writing Classes, English for Academic Studies, and free Conversation Classes.

Aside from these classes, EEC offers students various **Support Services** to help them stay on track to accomplish their goals, including Supplemental Tutoring, Student Advising, the Facebook Learner Network, Distance Learning, and Study Hall.

## Destination Workforce®

EEC originally launched the Destination Workforce® program with the dream of offering adults the basic skills in English language and literacy to improve their employability and allow them to participate more fully and equitably in the workplace so they can advance towards self-sufficiency. We partner with different employers who see the value of improving their employees' lives, reducing staff turnover, enhancing performance, and improving customer service.

Over the years, we have worked with a variety of partners, including the DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton in Tysons Corner, Capital One, Marymount University, Arlington Restaurant Partners, City of Alexandria Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities (ARPCA), and José Andrés' Think Food Group, tailoring each class to their brand, industry, and performance goals. Recently, we have partnered with Fairfax County to provide on-site language training to members of their Solid Waste Department staff. We continued to offer our Intensive English and Workforce Readiness course, a 100+ hour class for beginning-level adult English language learners (ELLs) preparing to enter or advance in the American workforce. In 2021, EEC enhanced our English for Work Online class to cover some of the basic skills needed to apply and interview for a job, such as career inventory, job searching skills, resume writing, cover letter writing, practice with online job applications and mock interviews with a coach. As part of our Destination Workforce® portfolio, these courses aim to provide the language and workplace soft skills needed to obtain entry-level employment and to participate more fully and confidently at work and in the community. Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing highlighted new opportunities for this program to better support ELLs in their path towards achieving their goals. Now with virtual and in-person offerings, reduced tuition, and a laptop loaner program, we continue to break down barriers and provide accessible English language education to adults in Northern Virginia and beyond.

It is critical for us to work together as a community to help everyone have equal access to the resources they need to obtain, succeed, and advance in entry-level jobs. We are so thrilled to have had the chance to work alongside local businesses to develop their workforce by upskilling their employees and look forward to future opportunities to enhance and add to our programming and help our learners have a brighter future.



# EEC Volunteers

This year at the English Empowerment Center, 542 volunteers gave 24,581 hours of service. Each volunteer brings unique skills and enthusiasm, creating a vibrant and supportive community where adult learners can thrive. Without their invaluable contributions, we could not achieve the remarkable progress we see each year.

Our volunteers engage in various roles, each crucial to our success. Some become certified to test English language learners with BEST Plus, ensuring that students are placed in the appropriate classes. Others assist at class registrations, helping to welcome and guide new learners as they embark on their educational journeys.

Class aides play an integral role by providing direct support to our instructors and students, creating a more personalized and effective learning experience. Student advisors offer guidance and encouragement, helping learners navigate their educational paths and achieve their goals. Additionally, volunteers lend a hand in our office, assisting with a variety of tasks that keep our operations running smoothly.

Each volunteer's contribution, whether big or small, makes a significant impact. Their dedication not only enhances the learning experience for our students but also enriches our entire community. The bonds formed and the support given by our volunteers create an environment where learners feel valued and motivated to succeed.

To all our volunteers, we extend our deepest gratitude. Your commitment and generosity are the driving force behind the English Empowerment Center's success. Together, we are creating a brighter future for our learners and our community.

If you are passionate about adult education and helping immigrants settle into life in this region, consider joining our team of volunteers. You can make a difference in an individual's life, a family's opportunities, and a community's future.

If you are interested in learning more about volunteering with the English Empowerment Center, please fill out and submit the form from the QR code. Once we receive your volunteer interest form, we will email you with next steps. If you have any questions along the way, please contact us at [volunteers@englishempowermentcenter.org](mailto:volunteers@englishempowermentcenter.org).



# EEC Learners

## EEC Learners' Top 10 Countries of Origin



1. Afghanistan



2. El Salvador



3. Bolivia



4. Honduras



5. Peru



6. Guatemala



8. Colombia



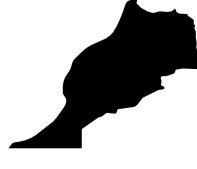
8. South Korea



9. Venezuela



10. Mexico



11. Morocco



12. Ethiopia

### Learner Facts

- EEC's 2,218 learners came from 77 different countries and spoke 46 different languages.
- 72% were female and 85% of all learners were between ages 25-59.
- 58% lived below the federal poverty line (\$31,200 for a family of four).
- 59% had one or more jobs.
- 2,139 dependent children had parents in EEC programs.
- Top 10 native languages included Spanish, Dari, Arabic, Pashtu, Farsi/Persian, Korean, Amharic, Vietnamese, Russian, and Chinese.
- 20% of learners had nine years or less of education before coming to EEC.



**2024 Patricia M. Donnelly Merit Scholar  
Carminia Zurita**

### Learner Achievement: Over 90% of Learners Achieved Two or More Goals

EEC's learners achieved many significant goals this year. In addition to the goals listed below, 1,634 learners achieved personal goals such as voting for the first time, being more engaged in conversations, and increasing involvement in children's education. 434 learners were able to improve wellness and attain healthier lifestyles.

**752**

Attained  
Consumer  
Skills

**467**

Entered/  
Retained  
Employment

**1,007**

Improved  
Employability  
Skills

**1,145**

Improved  
Technology  
Skills

**685**

Increased  
Involvement in  
the Community

# EEC in the Community

EEC actively attended a variety of conferences and symposiums to share our experiences nationally and internationally, presenting at community fairs, public hearings, and cultural celebrations to raise public awareness of adult English education. Below are a few of the year's highlights.

## July 2023

- EEC staff were proud to participate with other community organizations in the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors meeting for the Proclamation of Immigrant Heritage Month 2023!
- Thanks to a generous donor, EEC staff enjoyed a fantastic outing cheering on the Washington Mystics!

## October 2023

- EEC instructor, Cassandra Kramer, received the Joan E.D. Kushnir Teacher of the Year award from the Virginia Association for Adult and Continuing Education (VAACE) for her outstanding work with English language learners.

## November 2023

- We have completed one incredible year as the English Empowerment Center! On November 9, 2022, we announced that we would be changing our name from the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia to the English Empowerment Center to better reflect our mission and growth.

## December 2023

- English Empowerment Center staff participated in our annual day of service by volunteering with Western Fairfax Christian Ministries.



- Xavier Muñoz, EEC's Director of Academic Programs and Student Services, was elected as the Assistant Membership Director for LESLLA (Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults)!

## March 2024

- Yield Giving and LeverforChange announced that the English Empowerment Center received a \$1 million gift as one of the Yield Giving Open Call's awardees working with people and in places experiencing the greatest need in the United States!
- EEC was featured on NBC4 Washington with newscaster Aimee Cho who interviewed Executive Director, Roopal Saran, and several EEC learners

## April 2024

- EEC held its 6th annual A Taste of Literacy! Over 200 individuals joined us in-person to celebrate the work being done at EEC and hear stories of success and perseverance from three of our dedicated English language learners: Muna, Silvio, and Eunice!

## May 2024

- EEC's second annual Career and Opportunities Fair was an immense success where we were able to serve over 200 individuals and provide valuable information for career, educational, and personal advancement. We were thrilled to host a variety of organizations offering growth opportunities to individuals in the community as well as offer EEC's own career search services such as a resume review, mock interview, and resume workshop.
- Richard "Rip" Sullivan, Jr. a member of the Virginia House of Delegates from the 6th district, which encompasses parts of Arlington and Fairfax counties came by to EEC to deliver a Commending Resolution recognizing the accomplishments of EEC.

## June 2024

- EEC had a full house for our 62nd Annual Recognition Ceremony where we had the honor to hear EEC learners Jakeline, Juan Pablo, and Amina share their inspirational essays on the theme "A World of Opportunity". Our guest speaker, Supervisor Andres Jimenez, delivered an impactful address that inspired our audience to make the most of the opportunities that life presents them and use their gifts to better the community.
- EEC's Executive Director, Roopal Saran, accepted the Immigrant Heritage Month proclamation at the June 11 Fairfax County Board of Supervisors meeting.

In the past year, EEC held 15 events to recruit and train volunteers, including 10 EEC 101 events (information sessions on our mission, history, and volunteer opportunities), three Instructor Trainings, and two BEST Plus 2.0 trainings. Through these opportunities, we met and worked with 200 new volunteers.

# Audited Financials

For 62 years, EEC has maintained its fiscal viability by fostering a diverse group of supporters, focusing on cost efficiencies, and leveraging community partnerships, including the contribution of its large volunteer force.

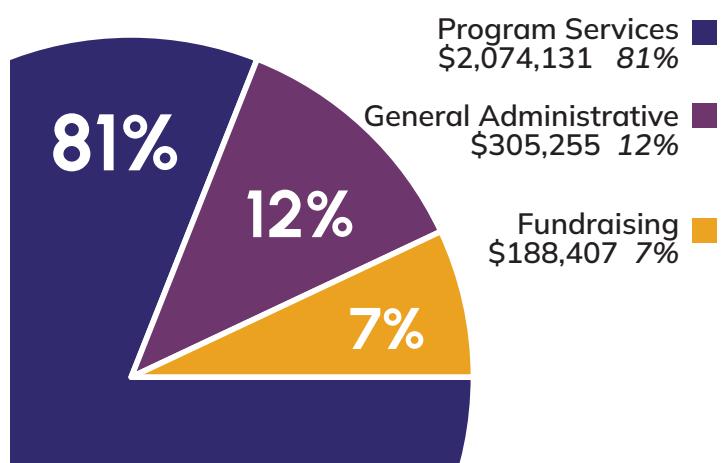
## Revenue FY2024

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024



## Expenses FY2024

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024



*“Before I started learning English, I felt like I can not talk with anyone outside of my house. Because I cannot talk with anyone I didn't understand what was going on around me and always depending on other people to help me. By learning English, now I can understand a little bit. I can talk with my neighbor and share my thoughts and feelings with others.”*

-SHAKILA, EEC LEARNER

*“Before I learned English, I felt very sad. Now I can speak and understand. When I went to the hospital, I didn't need a translator. I practice every day listening to conversations...I have opportunities in the world because I learn English. I will get a better job in the future and save money to buy a house. I am very grateful, and being able to buy a house is a big opportunity for me because I have a family”*

- SAFIA, EEC LEARNER

# Our Team

## Staff

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**Jenny Lizer**, Development Manager  
**Michael Mahrer**, Senior Director of Advancement  
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**Sahra Nadiir**, Financial and Operations Manager  
**Eiman Nimer**, Intensive Program and Site Operations Manager  
**Soo Park**, Instructional Design Manager  
**Juan Perez**, Student Services Coordinator  
**Francisco Quesada**, Student Records and Data Coordinator



**Nada Raja**, Academic Operations and Digital Literacy Manager  
**Melissa Rea**, Faculty Support Manager  
**Marizol Rojas**, Office Administrator & Student Liaison  
**Rachel Rokes**, Volunteer and Site Operations Coordinator  
**Amy Tristan**, Volunteer and Outreach Manager  
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