



# ANNUAL REPORT 2025



English  
Empowerment Center  
Learn English. Change your life.

## 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,

I am grateful for the opportunity to reflect on all of the incredible work that has been done this year at the English Empowerment Center. Our learners, volunteers, teachers, staff, and supporters all play an essential role in advancing our mission, sustaining our programs, and building the community.

At EEC, we teach adults the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English so they can access employment, education, and become more immersed in the community. Our students come to us with a wide range of experiences and goals, and our programs are designed to teach practical skills, supportive and be responsive to the needs of learners.

We continue to offer both in-person and online classes with understanding of common barriers and to ensure learners can access education along with busy schedules and responsibilities. Alongside language instruction, we also incorporate digital literacy skills that support learners in today's workplaces, schools, and everyday systems. These skills help learners navigate daily tasks with greater independence and confidence.

Our work depends on the commitment of our volunteers and instructors, whose dedication and care create environments where adult learners can make steady progress. Their efforts, combined with the determination of our learners, drive incredible language and personal growth in the classroom.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on strengthening our programs and expanding access to high-quality English education. The need for this work continues, and we are committed to meeting it with intention and care.

Thank you for being part of the English Empowerment Center. Your support makes this work possible and helps ensure that adult learners have the tools they need to move forward.

With much appreciation,



Roopal Mehta Saran  
Executive Director



# Academic Programs

EEC served over 2,000 adult learners in our in-person classes throughout Northern Virginia and online, 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, Book Club, 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 engage 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), José Andrés' Think Food Group, and Fairfax County Solid Waste Department, tailoring each class to their brand, industry, and performance goals. We also 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. With both virtual and in-person offerings, affordable 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.

We believe it is critical to work together as a community to ensure everyone has equal access to the resources needed to obtain, succeed in, and advance in the workplace. We are thrilled to have had the opportunity to partner with local businesses to develop their workforce by upskilling employees, and we look forward to future opportunities to expand and enhance our programming to help learners build brighter futures.



# EEC Volunteers

This year at the English Empowerment Center, 685 volunteers gave 27,449 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 the new BEST Plus 3.0, 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. Beyond the classroom, 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.

*"I have the privilege of being a teacher's aide at the English Empowerment Center. The work being done in the classroom is not only important for the students, but often life-changing. Students from all over the world have the opportunity to embark on English classes and learn from some incredible teachers for a very small fee that normally would cost students a lot of money. The teachers and students often develop very warm and compassionate bonds which open up worlds of opportunity for the students."*

-EEC Volunteer

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 12 Countries of Origin



1. Bolivia



2. Afghanistan



3. El Salvador



4. Honduras



5. Guatemala



6. Peru



7. Colombia



8. South Korea



9. Vietnam



10. Venezuela



11. Ethiopia



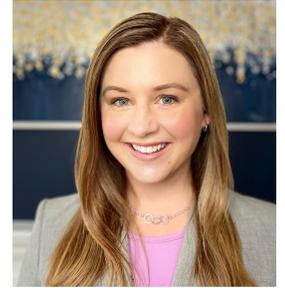
12. Morocco

## Learner Facts

- EEC's 2,739 learners came from 81 different countries and spoke 44 different languages.
- 72% were female and 85% of all learners were between ages 25-59.
- 54% lived below the federal poverty line (\$32,150 for a family of four).
- 58% had one or more jobs.
- 2,044 dependent children had parents in EEC programs.
- Top 10 native languages included Spanish, Dari, Arabic, Pashtu, Farsi/Persian, Korean, Vietnamese, Amharic, French, and Turkish.
- 22% of learners had nine years or less of education before coming to EEC.



2025 Patricia M.  
Donnelly Merit  
Scholar:  
Firoza Omar



2025 Mid Allen  
Ries Awardee:  
Cassandra  
Kramer

## Learner Achievement: Over 98% of Learners Achieved Two or More Goals

EEC's learners achieved many significant goals this year. In addition to the goals listed below, 1,695 learners achieved personal goals such as voting for the first time, being more engaged in conversations, and increasing involvement in children's education. 356 learners were able to improve wellness and attain healthier lifestyles.

871

Attained  
Consumer  
Skills

600

Entered/  
Retained  
Employment

1,030

Improved  
Employability  
Skills

1,125

Improved  
Technology  
Skills

673

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 2024

- Executive Director, Roopal Mehta Saran was honored as Citizen of the Year 2024 by the Rotary Club of Bailey's Crossroads, VA!
- Virginia State Senator, Saddam Salim, and Fairfax County Board of Supervisors- Mason District, Andres Jimenez visited our level 3 class in the evenings at James Lee Community Center to discuss the community.

## September 2024

- EEC was recognized by Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area for our dedication and commitment to LSSNCA's Employment Services.

## October 2024

- EEC teacher, Cassandra Kramer, was a top finalist for the Toyota Family Teacher of the Year award 2024.
- Six EEC staff attended the three day ProLiteracy Conference on Adult Education 2024 and presented on a variety of topics from teaching mental health awareness to using AI in program development.
- Senior Director of Advancement, Michael Mahrer, was a participant in the Fairfax County Digital Equity Summit Panel on Ensuring Digital Inclusion and Equity for Modern Life sponsored by Cox Communications and Inova Health system.

## December 2024

- English Empowerment Center staff enjoyed our annual day of service. We had a great time packing 633 boxes of food at the Capital Area Food Bank!

## March 2025

- Nada Raja, Academic Operations and Digital Literacy Manager, was recognized as a young leader through the Northern Virginia 40 Under 40 by the Leadership Center of Arlington and Leadership Fairfax.



## April 2025

- EEC held its 7th annual A Taste of Literacy! A full house of 250 individuals joined us in-person at the Army Navy Country Club to celebrate the impactful work being done at EEC and hear stories of perseverance, growth, and success from dedicated English language learners.

## May 2025

- EEC's third annual Career and Opportunities Fair was a strong success, serving nearly 300 individuals and connecting them with opportunities for career, education, and personal growth. We were glad to host a wide range of employers and community organizations, while also offering EEC's own career support services such as resume assistance, interview preparation, and networking workshops.



## June 2025

- EEC had a full house for our 63rd Annual Recognition Ceremony where we had the honor to hear EEC learners share their inspirational essays on the theme "Learning English Gives Me Confidence". This year's ceremony featured inspiring remarks from Keynote Speaker Tannia Talento and Commencement Speaker Angie Kim, who shared powerful personal stories of immigration, perseverance, and identity that deeply resonated with our community. In tribute to Congressman Gerry Connolly and his longstanding support for education, community development, and the mission of EEC, we announced the establishment of the Gerry E. Connolly Empowerment Award to honor those who exemplify the values of service, advocacy, and empowerment in the field of adult literacy.
- Volunteer & Outreach Manager, Amy Tristan was named the first-ever recipient of Volunteer Fairfax's People's Choice Award!

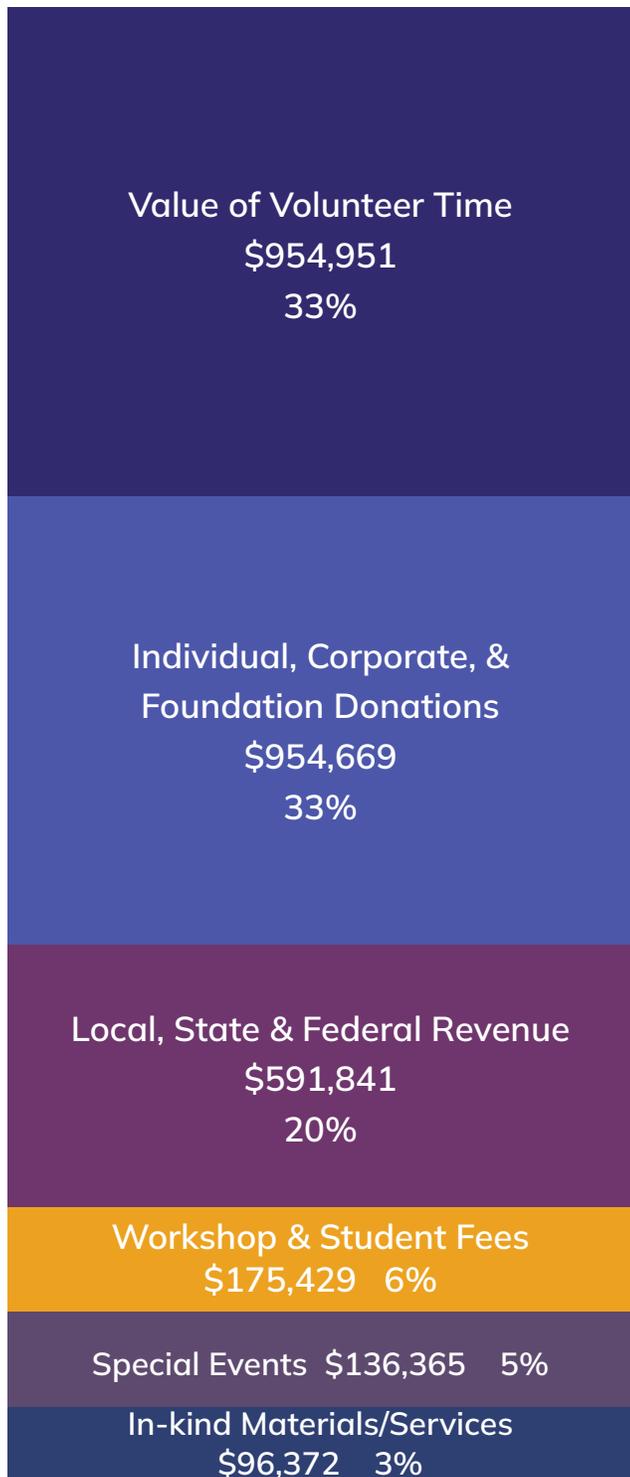


# Audited Financials

For 63 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.

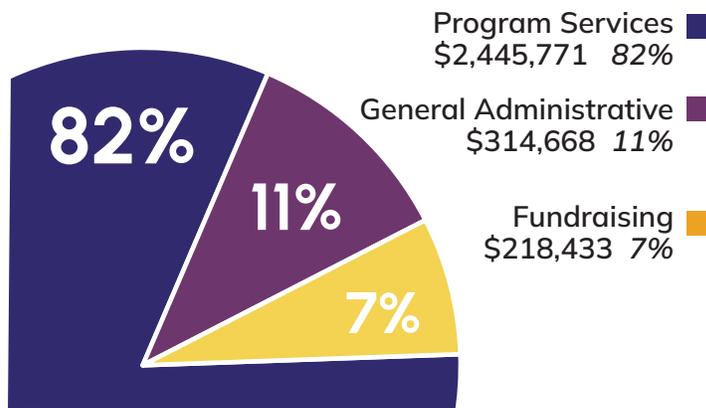
## Revenue FY2025

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025



## Expenses FY2025

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025



*"English is a tool that allows me to more easily integrate into social life, build relationships, and participate in various professional projects. Knowing the language also gives access to education, better jobs, and allows me to understand the full range of opportunities that this country offers."*

-OLEKSANDR, EEC LEARNER

*"Before learning English, I felt anxious. When my neighbors talked with me, I didn't understand but now English has changed my life. Now I speak English, I feel better. I can write and read out loud comfortably. Since taking English class, I have helped my child learn from home and I expand my vocabulary. It has helped me develop my ability to write clearly. By learning English, now I can speak English a little with friends and listen to English movies and conversation. In my English class, I am proud to have learned how to make appointments by phone and search for information online. As I continue to learn English, my dream for the future is to go to college and be a role model for my children."*

-HANAE, EEC LEARNER

# Our Team

## Staff

**Roopal Mehta Saran**, Executive Director  
**Kasia Helbin-Travis**, Program Coordinator  
**Ashley King**, Admissions Manager and Registrar  
**Phil Langer**, Grant Writer  
**Jenny Lizer**, Development Manager  
**Michael Mahrer**, Senior Director of Advancement  
**Abdulkadir Mirze**, IT Database Administrator  
**Xavier Muñoz**, Senior Director of Academic Programs and Student Services  
**Sahra Nadiir**, Financial and 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  
**Marin Uher**, Communications Coordinator  
**Lisa Vaughn**, Senior Development Manager

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 President, Cigna Healthcare Dental and Vision

**Carisa Pineda**  
 Management Specialist, Arlington County Child Advocacy Center

**Jeffrey Porro**  
 Executive Speech Writer, retired

**Tiffany L. Taber**  
 Chief Speechwriter and Managing Writer, U.S. Department of Education

**John V. Thomas**  
 Former Deputy General Counsel, retired Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

## Lead Teachers

Zainab Adib	Donna Giarratana	Gyana Lopez	Elizabeth Quillin
Fred Amico	Laurie Hayden	Victoria Lynott	Genevieve Rene
Masooma Azizi	Katie Isaac	Omar Misdaq	Eric Rogusky
Chaima Bagais	Lina Jae Kim	Wafa Misellati	Nargis Safi
Aaron Carlson	Abu Jafor	Troy Morgan	Waleed Safi
Kobi Carter Eidman	Azmat Jamalzai	Roshan Nawid	Megan Scrivener
Antoinette Castillo	Claire Kevill	Trevor Nordquist	Katrina Sorek
Vaishali Deshpande	Ana Kotyk	Enjila Norrzai	Lisa Trangsrud
Joan Ehrlich	Cassandra Kramer	Susannah O'Donnell	Roqia Warin
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 Florence Frey  
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 Vada Garcia  
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 Minal Handa  
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 Sarah Wetstone  
 William G. Wieand  
 Barbara Wien  
 Jennifer Williamson  
 Ron Wise  
 Nicole Yakatan and Steven Hamberg  
 David Yaskin  
 Tracey Yaw  
 Aziz Yazdani  
 Malcolm and Ann Young  
 Loren Zander  
 Gail S Zimmerman  
 Suzanne and Dennis Zimmerman

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# Literacy Circle

These donors have given in excess of \$50,000 to EEC and continue to support EEC's mission.



## Scholar (\$25,000–\$49,999)

Tom Angell | The Wollenberg Foundation

## Valedictorian (\$10,000–\$24,999)

Ann and John Heinrich | Larry and Bonnie Lefbom

## Salutatorian (\$5,000–\$9,999)

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## Dean's List (\$1,000–\$4,999)

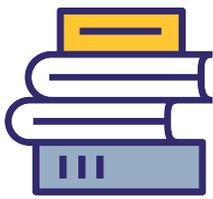
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