

THE PATH FORWARD:
BUILDING ON THE CAREER PATHWAYS WORK OF
THE SILICON VALLEY ALLIANCE FOR LANGUAGE LEARNERS'
INTEGRATION, EDUCATION, AND SUCCESS

JUNE 2015

INTRODUCTION

The Silicon Valley Alliance for Language Learners' Integration, Education, and Success (SV ALLIES) initiative was launched in September 2013 through a Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grant awarded to the County of San Mateo by the Department of Labor. SV ALLIES is a partnership dedicated to supporting English language learner (ELL) adults to attain and succeed in family-sustaining careers through collective impact and collaborative systems change in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties.

SV ALLIES was interested in investigating the potential for a “no wrong door” experience for ELLs in the two counties – that is to say, what would it take for ELLs to access the full range of workforce development and supportive services available in their region and appropriate to their needs and goals, no matter what their initial point of entry into the system? To explore this vision, SV ALLIES launched the Community Asset Referral System (CARS) project as part of the WIF grant. The intent of CARS was to understand challenges and develop strategies to increase the potential for information sharing, relationships, and coordination among service providers, in order to support ELL adults to more effectively access existing education, training, and support services. Working Partnerships USA was engaged as a consultant to SV ALLIES to produce research products focused on the two counties and designed to inform these goals, including:

- An asset map of ELL workforce development services and associated supportive services, as well as provider-specific data;
- Identification of industries and occupations of opportunity for ELLs;
- Demographic analysis of the ELL population; and
- ELL interviews for qualitative information about how students move through training, services, and other pathways to reach their goals.

As both this research and the WIF draw to a close, the purpose of this exit report is to present to SV ALLIES' stakeholders the key accomplishments and options for action in their continued pursuit of this vision of “no wrong door” support for ELLs and other beneficial collaboration among service providers and other leaders in the field. The report draws this analysis from the research products listed above, in addition to a series of focus group meetings with stakeholders in each county and interviews with collaboratives from across the country that have undertaken similar work and may function as models for SV ALLIES.

The report addresses five elements of increased cohesion that SV ALLIES aimed to explore:

- Service and training pathways;
- Building relationships;
- Access to information about existing programming;
- Alignment of databases and systems; and
- Securing resources.

The first section of the report draws out the implications of the four research products for these elements. Each subsection concludes by explaining how the research products can be a further resource for acting on the findings presented in the report. Based on the new information now available to us, what do we know now about the criteria for how an even more cohesive system should look? The second section discusses the current collaborative efforts in San Mateo and Santa Clara County that form the infrastructure for future collaboration. The final section presents options for next steps.

A “pathway” is defined in this report as sequential courses or services that lead students or clients to their educational or career goals regardless of which or how many agencies that student or client attends to access courses and/or services.

SETTING A NEW VISION FOR EXPANDED COHESION

SV ALLIES started this work because it saw the potential impact of “no wrong door access” to services and the creation of pathways, the importance of relationships and information to referrals, the benefits of system alignment, and the need to increase resources to meet demand and address gaps. The research product findings have a number of implications that alter, refine or refocus SV ALLIES' original vision for how to take cohesive approach to increasing English

language learner adults' access to the education, training, and services necessary to connect with family-sustaining employment.

The following is a brief discussion of the major findings and their implications for creating no wrong door access to services, including pathways; developing interagency and personal relationships; creating access to information about available services and agencies; aligning systems; and securing resources to address gaps.

Multi-Agency Pathways for Education, Training, and Services

SV ALLIES set out to increase ELL adult access to education, training, and services with an understanding that no single organization can address the whole scope of needs of the client population. The research products revealed that no small group of organizations – for example, one adult school, one community college, and one community-based social service provider – can consistently achieve this goal, either. Pathways are as diverse as students' needs and goals, though some pathways are more common. It is only possible to serve students through a true no wrong door approach that is capable of creating multiple pathways as needed.

- Two major factors in students' choice of agencies – often trumping the consideration of how well-matched an agency's capacities are to a students' needs and goals – are geographic proximity to students' homes and the presence of staff who can refer them from one agency to another based on a personal relationship. This means that agencies are intaking incredibly diverse students whom they may or may not be able to serve, and that staff members' own relationships largely dictate the world of resources available to those students. This finding underscores the importance of ensuring that staff at each agency have relationships at as many other agencies as possible.
- Agency types tend to fill certain niches: Community-based organizations are the major suppliers of supportive services; adult schools provide the most adult basic education, and were the only agencies to report offering high school diploma/GED programming and testing; and community colleges offer degree and vocational programming. These niches dictate common pathways that deserve priority, as many students will travel them and thus “no wrong door” systems can be set up to handle this higher volume of students. Because of the diversity of both students and agencies, however, creating multiple pathways in addition to these common ones is crucial, as discussed above.
- Connecting students to employment at the end of a pathway is a perpetual goal and challenge of the workforce development system. The research products demonstrated that social and

professional networks were as or more important than education and training for students in obtaining employment. These social and professional networks, however, were built through participation in classes, so getting students into classes should still be understood as an important goal of referrals in a “no wrong door” system.

- No wrong door creates access to a variety of programming and services, but there are gaps that exist in the content of the system that cannot be addressed through pathways, including a shortage of housing options; a lack of connection with immigration services and employment opportunities; and a lack of high school diploma completion and child care programs.

The research product illustrate the common pathways that are beneficial to many ELLs. For example, the research found that a large percentage of ELLs in the two counties do not have high school diplomas; but that most occupations of opportunity that are open to ELLs in each county require at least a high school diploma. The English Language Learner interviews also anecdotally demonstrate the diverse needs and goals of ELL adults to achieve their career and language goals. Please refer to these sources for more information about which common pathways must be reinforced and the importance of a diversity of pathways.

Building and Strengthening Relationships

As explained above, the pathways that a student takes are largely dictated by the agency with which they have a first point of contact, making deliberately-built, diverse relationships that include the many layers of staff that have a role in referrals integral to serving a diverse range of client needs and providing pathways options to students. Just as students reported following a pathway between agencies that had established relationships, agencies also reported that their established relationships were one of the most commonly decisive factors in determining where they refer clients. As a result, clients’ access to needed services and resources largely relies on the breadth of relationships of agency staff. The research products yielded the following insights about what kind of relationships will be most effective in supporting student success:

- Referrals are made through counselors; faculty; and staff of an agency, and may be formal—completed between staff officially responsible for referrals—or informal, such as a teacher suggesting an agency to a student. Thus the limiting – or expanding – factor in students’ access to diverse referrals is not only the breadth of relationships of the staff formally tasked with referrals, but also the breadth of relationships of all agency staff that have student contact.

- There are already strong relationships that exist between agencies, especially between educational institutions. Specifically, stronger relationships community-based agencies and others beyond adult schools and community colleges would allow these webs better to reflect students' diverse needs and goals.
- A wide variety of avenues have proven effective for building and strengthening interagency relationships; a full discussion of this point can be found in the WIF grant evaluation.

The asset map data identify agencies and staff with which to prioritize developing a relationship, based on the pathways being created to meet the needs of students/clients as discussed in the previous section. The information provided in the asset map data facilitates an agency's staff ability to identify where a client can access the education, training, or services they seek as well as the point person for referrals to that agency.

Increasing Access to Information

The research products found as valid the common-sense assumption that increased access to information by agency staff will facilitate that agency's ability to connect its clients to appropriate services and education. One of the two most commonly taken approaches that agencies take to helping clients whom they themselves cannot serve, besides relying on personal relationships, is to provide the client with the contact information of an agency that the staff member's information suggests is best suited to that client. Inversely, shortage of accurate, searchable information about all services and programming in a region that can be used to identify appropriate services for a student or client was identified by agencies as a major barrier to referrals. Increasing the access of staff to information not only increases their referrals but also increases the access to information of students themselves because students typically rely on agency staff more than the internet or other sources to answer their questions about pathways and services.

- Information alone is not sufficient; quality matters, stakeholders said. Usable information includes all data relevant to understanding which agencies provide the education, training, or services that can complete pathways; whether a service or program is appropriate for a client or student; and how to make referrals to that agency or service. Stakeholders also emphasized the importance of up-to-date information, stating that outdated information is little better than no information at all.
- Agency staff members' information needs go deeper than simply knowing which other agencies offer which types of services and training. Stakeholders expressed a strong desire for

more information about pathways and which types of services and training are most appropriate for which students given their needs, assets and goals. Students similarly reported a lack of information about next steps on a career pathway is a major barrier to achieving their career goals. Agencies reported a lack of connection to labor market information as a barrier to connecting students with appropriate education, training, or services. Thus agencies expressed interest in having this kind of labor market and pathways information integrated with information related to assets and referrals.

The research products and asset map provide both types of information. Staff can look up on the asset map website ESL classes offered in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties and are provided with most of the information needed to make a referral to an agency. In addition, the other asset map entries provide information about services and programming other than ESL, which can also be used to populate the website if it is expanded to include other services; or which could be developed into a separate, searchable database. The occupations of opportunity analysis includes the level of education required for each occupation, which allows staff to direct a student towards an appropriate degree program. If a student with no high school diploma is interested in becoming an accountant, for example, agency staff can consult the occupations of opportunity analysis to determine the student would need a bachelor's degree for that occupation. The staff could then search the asset map entries to find a high school diploma completion or GED program at an adult school or other agency in close proximity to the student's home, and direct the student to that first step along her or his desired career pathway.

Aligning Systems and Infrastructure

Stakeholders acknowledged the value of aligning systems – such as databases, assessments, curricula, and information tracking systems – towards establishing “no wrong door” access to education and services for students and clients. When systems are not aligned, it can be impossible to be sure a class or service is appropriate for a client, or whether a client is eligible for a program or service. A client may be referred to a program they do not test into, or they are unable to complete, and then must be referred to another agency for which they may be eligible. System alignment insures a client is eligible for the education, training, or services they are referred to and that the client or student is progressing along a pathway regardless of the agency they attend. It can also save clients' time in going through multiple intake processes, which may increase access by making this sometimes intensive or even intimidating process less of a barrier. At the same time, system alignment is a daunting undertaking due to the diversity of systems in

use and the resource intensiveness of changing and implementing systems. Effective system alignment takes into account the following:

- The complexity of aligning systems makes an incremental approach appealing. One way to do this is to focus work on one area of alignment at a time – such as curriculum, assessments, or client information databases – and the area of alignment focused on should be one that work has been started on, e.g. ESL assessments; and that stakeholders are interested in and committed to completing.
- Looking at client intake and information alone, the vast variability presents an appreciable challenge. Agencies who responded to surveys use 27 different systems for client intake and collect different sets of information about clients due to disparate eligibility requirements.
- Concerns about client/student privacy, including the aspects of privacy protected by law but also privacy around documentation status, were also forefront for stakeholders.
- The connections created and strengthened by aligning systems will insure students are progressing along pathways and accessing services to overcome barriers regardless of the different infrastructures of the various agencies one student might attend.
- Any alignment efforts must necessarily build upon relationships among agency staff and the sharing of information about agencies' current systems, thus the research undertaken by SV ALLIES can provide a foundation for any alignment efforts that stakeholder choose to prioritize.

The foundations for alignment are created through the research product analyses: the asset map website and entries provide information about the curriculum focuses of ESL classes and the eligibility requirements of agencies and programs. The asset map website is also capable of displaying the assessment tools used for ESL programs, and the cut off scores for individual classes. The asset map analysis identifies the 27 systems used by agencies in client intake, and the processes agencies use to complete referrals and client intake. This information can be used to identify which area of alignment is most feasible to complete, in addition to the groundwork for that alignment.

Securing Resources

The research products demonstrated that there is significant unrealized potential in the system. Many agencies reported that they have space available in their programs, and the comparison of the types of resources offered with the needs workers and employers suggest that an improved referral system could fill those spaces. The comparison also demonstrates, however, that there is

simply greater demand for certain services than there is availability, irrespective of any improvements in referrals. This points to the need for greater resources. Agencies reported a major barrier to being able to serve all clients who seek their help is a lack of resources to build the capacity to offer more or other services; and focus group members stated a lack of funding for collaboration as a barrier to building relationships and pathways.

- The work of SV ALLIES stakeholders sits at the intersection of a number of fields that are undergoing major change in their policy and funding landscapes right now, not the least of which are AB 86 consortia's development of regional plans for adult education and administrative relief for undocumented immigrants. These major changes will likely alter both supply of and demand for services as well as the resources available.
- Critical to the improved match-up of services with student needs and goals is the improved match-up of resources with student needs and goals. One challenge identified by stakeholders is that current funder evaluation metrics, especially those used to evaluate a student's progression at community college towards transfer to a four-year institution, do not reflect the diversity of students' language, education, and career goals. Accurate evaluation of programming will also illustrate the most effective programming and responses to gaps to potential funders.

The research product analyses provide stakeholders with the information needed to illustrate to potential funders where resources are most needed to create pathways into occupations of opportunity. The major gaps identified through the analyses that cannot be addressed through the creation of pathways demonstrate to funders where resources are needed to establish new programming. In addition, the occupations of opportunity analysis provides a list of those occupations, by county and including the required level of education, that provide the most opportunity to ELL adults in Silicon Valley. In addition, the asset map entries illustrate the available degree and certificate programs in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. Existing career pathways are those degree and certificate programs that align with an occupation of opportunity; those occupations that do not have an associated degree or certificate program illustrate to potential funders where pathways need to be created that provide the most benefit to connecting ELL adults to family-sustaining employment.

CURRENT COLLABORATION IN SILICON VALLEY

This section includes a brief discussion and illustration of a subset of collaborations that have successfully created multi-agency pathways to serve ELL adults in San Mateo and Santa Clara

Counties, or have an impact on the landscape of services in the two counties. There are a number of current collaborative efforts that have worked on, or are working on, one or more of the elements discussed in the section above, and it was beyond the scope of this report to discuss them all. The collaborations discussed here include

- Four AB 86 consortia of adult schools and community colleges: ACCEL in San Mateo County; and Gavilan Regional Academic and Career Education Services (ACES), South Bay Consortium for Adult Education (SBCAE), and North Santa Clara County Student Transition Consortium (STC) in Santa Clara County. The final reports submitted to the state by the AB 86 consortia can be found at <http://AB 86.cccco.edu/Consortia.aspx>.
- The Alliance for Language Learners Integration, Education, and Success (ALLIES), a collaboration of providers of services for ELLs.
- The partnerships between Cañada College and Sequoia Adult School, and between San Jose City College (SJCC) and Campbell Adult & Community Education (CACE), each of which has aligned their curriculum and assessments.
- The Santa Clara County Office of Immigrant Relations' (formerly Immigrant Relations and Integration Services) immigrantinfo.org, a web-based database of services available in Santa Clara County for immigrants that was launched in 2001.

These collaborations represent places where the type of cohesion discussed above could be built out, building on the research products and broader lessons and accomplishments of SV ALLIES. This inventory of their relevant infrastructure, activities and plans is organized under the same five elements of increased cohesion discussed above.

Increasing Access to Information and Multi-Agency Pathways for Education, Training, and Services

Three AB 86 consortia – Gavilan Regional ACES, SBCAE, and ACCEL – are developing or planning to develop websites as central points of access to information about all programming and some non-educational services available in their regions, which will be used by students, faculty, and other staff. All four AB 86 consortia operating in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties have stated commitments to working with community-based, workforce-related, and other organizations to insure students have access to all the services they need to complete education and career pathways.

ALLIES is also dedicated to insuring community-based organizations are included in the AB 86 efforts. Recently, their ESL Providers Network served as the table for community-based organizations and AB 86 member institutions to start discussing stronger partnerships. They also launched a mini-grant program that will provide CBOs with resources to explore partnerships with AB 86 consortia and institutions.

The Santa Clara County Office of Immigrant Relations operates the immigrantinfo.org website, which includes information relating to ESL classes and a wide variety of other services available to immigrants in Santa Clara County. The ESL database is searchable, and the administrator of the site contacts ESL providers once per semester to update their information. Agencies providing other services contact the administrator when there are updates to their information, and the administrator corrects the information on the website. The Office of Immigrant Relations is also considering seeking partners to further develop their website, and to identify addition funding that can be used to make the site more user-friendly.

Building and Strengthening Relationships

All four AB 86 consortia have plans to increase partnerships with regional business and industry, and are targeting those relationships based on their analyses of occupations of opportunity. ACCEL, in San Mateo County, is also interested in using the occupations of opportunity analysis produced for SV ALLIES to supplement their findings. These partnerships are intended to inform career pathways and curricula, and to create employment opportunities—such as apprenticeships—for their students.

In addition, all four consortia have developed plans for professional development, which will include and engage all levels of staff from all member institutions. These development opportunities will address a variety of topics, from effective collaboration, to teaching methods, to developing career pathway curriculum. ALLIES has been the catalyst for many local partnerships through their ESL Providers Network. The Network meets twice per year, and includes educational components such as providing a space for agencies to share their best practices and to learn about policy that impacts ELLs.

ALLIES' work to bring AB 86 member institutions together with community-based organizations has provided a table that cuts across collaboration in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. Insuring community-based organizations are connected with AB 86 member institutions creates access to supportive services students need to complete their education or

employment goals. Sustaining relationships between collaborations and organizations will also facilitate the alignment of work to support ELL adults; and insure progress is made on the issues faced by ELL adults rather than repeating efforts.

Aligning Systems and Infrastructure

The AB 86 consortia have been tasked with creating “seamless transition” between adult schools and community colleges, including aligning curriculum and assessments. The consortia plan on aligning curriculum through joint meetings, work groups, and by building off the work already completed by partnerships between member institutions. In addition, three consortia—North Santa Clara County STC; SBCAE; and ACCEL—are planning on developing or adopting region wide assessment tools and processes.

The two partnerships—between Cañada and Sequoia, and SJCC and CACE—have already aligned their ESL curricula and assessments through data analysis and joint staff meetings. Each found that the upper levels of adult school ESL aligned with the 2nd or 3rd level of ESL at the colleges. Further, Cañada used this information to eliminate the placement test for Sequoia Adult School students, and automatically places them into the 2nd level of ESL. Both partnerships analyzed adult school student placement test scores to align their assessments; and both adult schools used those analyses in addition to the joint meetings about curricula to adjust their course offerings to better prepare students for college-level ESL.

In addition, San Mateo ALLIES, an offshoot of ALLIES, completed work to build guidelines for how ESL classes can be cross-walked between institutions, which became the base for the SV ALLIES asset map website tool. This includes listing the assessment tests used by each agency with the cut-off scores for each class; and a set of curriculum focuses that can be used to identify how curriculum aligns between institutions.

Securing Resources

As mandated by the AB 86 Initiative, the four AB 86 consortia are or are planning on collaborating financially to help fund their strategies to address gaps, and will be accessing state funding earmarked for the initiative or for state educational programming. ACCEL also plans on approaching private philanthropy for additional resources. The consortia will track information about student and programming outcomes to evaluate their effectiveness, and will base

programming decisions on that data. Three consortia—North Santa Clara County STC; SBCEAE; and ACCEL—are also planning on developing region-wide systems to track program outcomes.

The administrator of the Santa Clara County Office of Immigrant Relations' immigrantinfo.org tracks data about the supply of ESL services through their updating process. The administrator also tracks website hits and the services visitors are seeking, and provides a monthly or quarterly report to the Office of Immigrant Relations. The Office of Immigrant Relations mainly tracks ESL, vocational, and citizenship services data, but also conducts focus groups where they hear about gaps in other services. This allows them to track fluctuations in the supply of ESL and identify emergent gaps in ESL resources. Non-ESL providers contact the administrator with updates, which the administrator then completes.

The table below includes information about collaborative efforts that exist in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

OPTIONS FOR ACTION

The results of the research product analyses and other research present a number of options and opportunities to consider when deciding on next steps for collaboration that increases the access of ELL adults to education, training, and services to connect with family-sustaining employment. Local and national models have faced similar choices, and have developed best practices.

The research products were analyzed to identify potential options and opportunities, and key individuals from collaboratives in other regions were interviewed to understand how they have developed in response to similar choices. In addition to the local models discussed in the previous section, we found a rich set of models and lessons working with military veterans, service members, and their families. Each of these models has developed approaches to cross-sector collaboration to increase the access of their clients to the services, education, and training they need. The models discussed here include

- The Veteran's Community Action Team (VCAT), a project of the Altarum Institute, piloted model of collaboration in multiple regions to better serve veterans and their families. It is launching its newest collaboration in Michigan, where it is sponsored by the Department of Veteran's Affairs and is working to create a state-wide collaboration between civilian and military services across sectors.

- The San Diego Veterans Coalition (SDVC), a VCAT pilot project, which operates within San Diego County and counts over 130 organizations as members. In addition to creating and strengthening relationships between their member organizations, they have successfully worked within San Diego to insure tax money is allocated to needed services.
- The San Antonio Coalition for Veterans and their Families (SACVF), also a VCAT pilot project, whose collaborative work has engaged a variety of staff and agencies; their “higher level” group of Officers, CEOs, and other upper-level staff is now seeking its own 501(c)(3) status and plans on building a backbone organization with dedicated staff.
- The Peak Military Care Network (PMCN), which operates in the Pikes Peak region of Colorado. They have created a centralized model by establishing a call center and a website of services that are client-facing, and by creating information and data-sharing agreements with their member organizations. They also have developed a model of professional development to insure their call center appropriately refers clients and to provide service delivery training opportunities to staff of their member organizations.

Our discussion below presents a range of options for next steps based on the experiences and best practices of these models and lays out some considerations for the selection of a path forward for the work of growing cohesion in the service and training landscape.

Increasing Access to Information and Multi-Agency Pathways for Education, Training, and Services

The stakeholders that participated in focus group meetings expressed enthusiasm for the creation of a database that is searchable, provides information about the services their students need and the agencies that offer them, and facilitates “warm hand-off” referrals by providing contact information for designated referral staff. They also noted that developing a mechanism to update the information is crucial to insuring the database is usable.

As noted above, the SV ALLIES asset map website and the asset map entries provide the foundation for information about the many types of services or programming a client or student may need to achieve their educational and career goals. A major element of creating “no wrong door” access to programming and services requires a variety of staff with roles in referrals to have access to information about other agencies and their services that are available to clients. Stakeholders wishing to carry forward the work begun in the asset map are faced with a number of possibilities, each with different levels of investment required.

- Distributing the asset map data entries as-is, in Excel spreadsheets, will allow agencies to have information about multiple services and providers and could be searched on one dimension (e.g. for high school diploma classes). It would require the spreadsheets to be disseminated to agency staff to share with their colleagues.
- Using the asset map data entries to create a Pivot chart or an Microsoft Access database would allow the data to be searched on multiple levels (e.g. for high school diploma classes in the evening). Developing these databases would require more funding and staff time than the previous option.
- Expanding the SV ALLIES asset map website to include services other than ESL, and using the asset map data entries to populate that information, would provide agencies with a tool to search multiple fields, and would be easily distributed to and accessed by a variety of agency staff. Information about agencies that do not provide ESL classes, but do provide supportive/other services has already been entered into the website, including their contact or referral information. This option would also require a developer to include and populate additional information fields in the existing website.
- Providing links on the SV ALLIES asset map website to partners such as 2-1-1, career pathways websites, and the California Adult Schools website, would allow agencies to access other services through the website without the amount of resources required to expand the site itself.
- Partnering with other websites to integrate the SV ALLIES asset map database would leverage existing infrastructure to disseminate the information more widely. provide access to staff that is familiar with maintaining online databases, including updating processes. This would require identifying and approaching appropriate potential partners such as 2-1-1, immigrantinfo.org, or the California Adult Schools website; web development to integrate new information; and marketing and training resources to ensure that staff of SV ALLIES stakeholders were aware of and well-equipped to use these databases.

In considering the question of how to keep asset map data updated, we discovered two models. As previously mentioned, the Santa Clara County Office of Immigrant Relations has developed an updating mechanism for their website that may serve as a model for how to update the SV ALLIES asset map going forward. For immigrantinfo.org, non-ESL providers contact the administrator with updates; and the administrator contacts ESL providers. PMCN has implemented multiple approaches to updating information. Agencies are able to contact PMCN with information updates about themselves or other agencies, and PMCN verifies the accuracy of those updates before posting them on the website. They also get updated information from their local 2-1-1, if possible. The volunteers that staff their call center also provide updated

information for the network. Finally, for large data updates, the administrator of the Network of Care, which operates their website of services, helps with data scrubbing. For SV ALLIES asset map data going forward:

- Allowing agencies access to the database to update their information as-needed would create an updating mechanism that would not require additional staff, but it would require quality assurance and control to insure that inaccuracies and inconsistencies were not introduced. Absent the support of a coordinator, many agencies are unlikely to prioritize this update given their other important work.
- The reminder to agencies to update their information could be automated and sent on a schedule, such as once a semester or once a quarter, but our experience administering the asset map survey demonstrated that automated invitations must be paired with staff outreach in order to gain sufficient responses.
- A staff person, such as a network administrator, could contact agencies to gather information and update the database, which would insure information is updated on a regular basis. This would require additional funding for this role, as well as an identified organization to host the work.

Building and Strengthening Relationships

Stakeholders affirmed the importance of building relationships to create “no wrong door” access to services, connect students and clients to employment, and align systems. Stakeholders also recognize the importance, and difficulty, of maintaining engagement of other stakeholders over time, as various efforts and work pull people in many directions.

Focusing on connecting students to employment, each of the four AB 86 consortia has analyzed occupations of opportunity in its own region, and ACCEL is interested in using the occupations of opportunity analysis completed for this grant. In addition, ALLIES is working to insure that community-based and other organizations are connected with AB 86 consortia across regions.

- The occupations of opportunity analysis shows which industries in each county offer the best job prospects for ELL adults, which allows workforce development professionals to target industries to engage in the collaboration. This is a first step but will require identifying and reaching out to key employers in those industries in either the county, or in a smaller defined geographic area appropriate for an agency’s students.

- The SV ALLIES pilot project evaluations can be used to identify best practices for employer engagement, which would allow them to be used as models for connecting ELL adults to employment. This would require an analysis of the projects for best practices, developing a model based on those best practices, and positioning those models as tools that can be adapted by agencies throughout the region.

In addressing the difficulty of attracting staff to relationship-building opportunities, the Peak Military Care Network, San Diego Veterans Coalition, and San Antonio Coalition for Veterans and their Families have all found that including a training or learning component in meetings that ties directly into delivery of service keeps agency staff engaged in the collaboration, and facilitates the engagement of new agencies. The AB 86 consortia have plans for professional development trainings and the ALLIES ESL Providers Network includes learning components in its meetings. These may provide models for other Silicon Valley collaboratives going forward.

The AB 86 consortia also have plans to include multiple layers of staff in their professional development to insure there is engagement in the collaboration at every level of a member organization. This creates multiple levels of buy-in to the work of the collaboration, and lays the foundation for collaboration activities to be institutionalized. Engaging upper-level staff also facilitates the bureaucratic process that may be required for collaboration, such as signing memoranda of understanding.

The Peak Military Care Network also uses memoranda of understanding as agreements for information sharing, as well as another level of commitment by partner agencies to participate in the collaboration. The San Diego Veterans Coalition has a Standard Operating Procedures manual as well, which outlines the expectation of partner agencies as members of the collaboration. Developing memoranda of understanding can provide another level of commitment for members of the collaboration through clear expectations of an agency's participation in the group. This would require the development of language for the memorandum of understanding, as well as agreed-upon rules and guidelines for member participation developed through meetings and discussions.

Aligning Systems and Infrastructure

Aligning systems was brought up in many stakeholder meetings—there is energy in the group to create aligned systems to make navigation of classes and services more efficient for clients. As discussed in the previous section, there has already been some work done to align assessments

and curriculum through local agency partnerships; and the AB 86 consortia are working further to align curriculum and assessments.

- Using the alignment work that has already been completed through agency partnerships and the AB 86 consortia provides a foundation and guidelines for further alignment without developing a new process. This would require analyzing the curriculum, assessments, and systems that are already aligned to identify patterns that can be applied to other agencies.
- Including the cut-off score information for the ESL classes in the ALLIES asset map website would provide the data to analyze current ESL course levels and identify how they currently align. This would require either reaching out to agencies to enter their cut-off scores into the database in the fields provided. In addition, staff would need to analyze the data when they are gathered to identify patterns that can be used to align classes.
- Once the cut-off score data has been analyzed, course titles can be adjusted between agencies, which would insure the database reflects the aligned educational pathways available to students.

As discussed in the previous section, the AB 86 consortia are also working to align data systems. The Peak Military Care Network provides a model. Its member agencies each have their own intake processes and data storage methods appropriate to their unique needs, but they facilitate referrals by sharing a list of the type of client data that need to be captured during intake so that they are able to assess eligibility for multiple agencies, not just their own. They also have agencies develop informed consent forms specific to sharing patient information with PMCN and partner agencies which the patient signs during intake, which requires some education of the patient so they understand why they sign two informed consent forms—one for the specific agency, and the other for PMCN and partner agencies. Following this model would require a central group deciding which data needs to be collected, and a process for sharing that information with other agencies to which a client is referred.

A centralized, backbone structure is a wide-spread best practice among model collaboratives, and would allow the collaboration to cut across the multiple tables that exist in the two counties. Backbone institutions are also often helpful for providing navigation to clients. Altarum Institute's Veterans Community Action Teams project in Michigan hopes to create a case management system and provide a case manager to clients to insure they are navigating through the system of services along a pathway that leads to self-sufficiency.

Securing Resources

Resources are a central issue and tension in any effort to collaboration. Resources to support collaboration are scant, but engaging in it is resource-intensive. This leaves many agencies with the unacceptable choice either to divert resources from their core work or to minimize their collaboration.

Some agencies fear that collaboration will strain their resources not only because of the work required but also because it will increase the number of clients coming through their doors. Looking to our models elsewhere in the country, the Peak Military Care Network, San Diego Veterans Coalition, San Antonio Coalition for Veterans and their Families, and Veterans Community Action Teams have all found that their collaboration has increased the ability of the system as a whole to meet demand for services without requiring individual agencies to increase their resources. These collaborations found that while the ability for the system to serve more clients increased, the increased coordination through referrals between agencies allowed that demand to be better spread out among service providers. PMCN also found that the increased collaboration between agencies streamlined funding requests to potential funders—rather than numerous funding requests for programs that served small subsets of one population, funders began receiving fewer requests for programs that served a broader segment of the veteran, service member, and their families population. Tracking data about clients served and the need for additional resources can help make the case to resource collaborative work by identifying 1) whether increased collaboration has increased the efficiency of agencies through allowing them to accept clients best suited for their services, while referring others and 2) whether agencies that had previously experienced an excess of capacity in their services, experience an increase in demand.

This would require the development of a process and/or a system for tracking that information, in addition to a commitment by all agencies involved in the collaboration to participate in that process. In developing methods for evaluating collaboration overall, the Peak Military Care Network is currently piloting an evaluation process to measure the effectiveness of referrals from their call centers by conducting follow-up surveys to ask clients if the service they were referred to was helpful and met their needs. If the referral did not help the client, PMCN implements professional development opportunities for call-center volunteers to learn how to better refer a client with that set of needs. The San Diego Veterans Coalition surveys their member agencies to understand how the collaboration has increased their relationships and impacted their ability to deliver services to clients. Developing indicators to measure the effectiveness of collaboration to address gaps and serve clients will illustrate to potential funders which programs or areas of

collaboration are the most beneficial to connecting ELL adults to family-sustaining employment. This requires a core group to agree on indicators, and participating agencies to commit to tracking the information or data used in the evaluation process.

Further analysis of the research products can also identify specific gaps in services and programming that call for increased investment. Ongoing analysis of existing classes, services, and programming will also identify emergent gaps. The San Diego Veterans Coalition conducted an in-depth community asset analysis prior to its creation over five years ago, and they have had to implement other analyses to identify gaps that have emerged over the years. They utilized the tools available through county surveys and compared those to their original community asset analysis to understand which gaps have been addressed, which still exist, and any new gaps that have emerged. As discussed in the previous section, in addition to tracking website hits and services sought through immigrantinfo.org, the Santa Clara County Office of Immigrant Relations specifically tracks information regarding the supply of ESL, vocational, and citizenship services in Santa Clara County, and learns about other gaps in services through focus groups.

- If the asset map data is analyzed by zip code or other defined geographic sub-area, and compared to the data in the demographics analysis about the major populations within that sub-area, specific gaps in classes and services will emerge. This would require additional resources for staff or volunteers to define the sub-areas and analyze the two products.
- The occupations of opportunity analysis can be used to identify which pathways currently exist into those occupations, and how existing classes fit into those pathways. This would also identify which pathways need to be created or completed, which would allow agencies to target their work in developing classes and programming for those pathways. It would require additional resources to conduct the analyses and to develop strategies to address career pathways needs that emerge.
- The AB 86 analyses of occupations of opportunity within their regions can also be examined to identify existing pathways and how classes currently fit into those pathways. This would also identify where pathways need to be created or strengthened, but in a smaller geographically-defined area than provided by the occupations of opportunity analysis.
- The Santa Clara County Office of Immigrant Relations can provide additional information about the supply and demand for services based on the data collected through their website, as well as about emerging gaps based on the information they collect in their other work.

Going forward, new referral systems for ELLs in Silicon Valley may facilitate the identification of additional gaps in services, training and support. As a model, the Peak Military Care Network

tracks data about the services clients are seeking through their call center, which uses an online database of services to track referrals made.

- Tracking data about demand for services through the website tool will create another data set for potential funders to understand the gaps that need to be address through additional resources, rather than through collaboration. The website currently has a feature that can track the referrals made to classes, which could be used as a foundation for tracking data about supply and demand for classes. This would require all agencies that use the website tool to document their referrals through the site's referral tool.
- The updating mechanism for the SV ALLIES asset map website can also be used to track the supply of services, as classes are added or eliminated when information is updated. This will illustrate to funders which classes fluctuate in availability, and may need resources to offer permanently depending on the demand for them. This would require an updating mechanism that is operated by a staff person who can track the changes in class offerings as they gather information for updates.

Finally, there is a shift occurring in the current landscape of collaboration and services with the implementation of the AB 86 consortia, which is targeted to improve students' access and navigation of the education system. Another shift in demand is on the horizon as the immigration reform Executive Orders are implemented, which may open services and programming up to ELLs and/or immigrants who otherwise would not be able to legally access them.

- Approaching funders to help fund agencies that provide services to the populations that are impacted by this policy change will allow those agencies to take advantage of the policy shifts and connect those ELLs to family-sustaining employment. This requires identifying prospective funders and illustrating to them the potential impact on ELLs by immigration reform, as well as illustrating the current collaborative work that is underway to increase access to services. In addition, the information about gaps in services should be presented to them to illustrate where funding is most needed to have the largest positive impact on the ELL population.
- An important role for collaborations to play is to monitor the impacts of immigration reform to keep agencies updated regarding how the policy change will impact ELLs' access to services and resources currently only available to clients with certain kinds of documentation status. This will require commitment by a group to research the potential impact of the policy changes and to brief other agencies and collaborations about their findings.

The ELL population in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties and the systems that serve it are highly complex. These options and opportunities are steps towards a vision of “no wrong door” access to programming and services, which, as verified by the research products, has potential to serve even better an ELL population with a diverse range of needs, assets and goals. The “no wrong door” approach is facilitated by strong relationships, access to information about programming and services available to clients and students, and alignment of systems. While this work can strengthen pathways and increase access to programming and/or services, some gaps that will still have to be resolved through increased resources. The local and national models of collaboration presented here provide lessons and best practices that can help guide work to further develop collaboration to support ELL adults. With these tools—the research product analyses, the asset map website, the model collaborations—and the many options and opportunities for future work, the collaborative work done in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties will continue to increase the access by ELL adults to education, training, and services, and attain family-sustaining employment in Silicon Valley.