

# BENCHMARKING AEBG GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

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Chancellor's Office

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In the following report, Hanover Research benchmarks and examines structure, organization, and components of AEBG consortia in California. The report synthesizes trends among consortia and identifies key aspects of consortia development and offerings.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

## INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND

In the 2013-2014 fiscal year, the California State Legislature passed Assembly Bill 86 (AB86), appropriating \$25 million to the California Community College Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO) to establish the Adult Education Consortium Program. The goal of the program was to expand the accessibility and quality of adult education. The CCCCCO provided funds to eligible consortia “for the purpose of developing regional plans for adult education.”<sup>1</sup>

In the 2015-2016 fiscal year, Assembly Bill 104 (AB104 or the Adult Education Block Grant, “AEBG”) appropriated \$500 million to CCCCCO and the California Department of Education, transitioning the Adult Education Consortium Program to the implementation phase.<sup>2</sup>

In this report, Hanover Research (Hanover) benchmarks and examines the governance activities of 16 of the 71 Adult Educational Regional Consortia within the CCCCCO. This report analyzes the structure, communication practices, decision-making models, community need, alignment of partnerships, and evaluation methods of these consortia. It also aims to discuss any changes in consortia’s governance structure from AB86 to the passage of AB104.

### METHODOLOGY

To select a representative sample of consortia, Hanover manually scanned the California district map and identified consortia from varying geographic locations and environments (e.g., rural, urban) across the state. Hanover reviewed the selected consortia’s submitted documentation, including governance plans, regional plans, organizational charts, and other supplemental materials, to assess their development from AB86 to AB104. These resources are listed in the Appendix.

The report details the sampled consortia’s structures, communication strategies, decision-making processes, community needs and current educational programming, alignment with state and federal programs, and evaluation methods. Hanover has also compiled an accompanying data supplement, which provides more detailed information pertaining to the membership, staffing, and current adult education programs of each selected consortium.

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<sup>1</sup> “History of AB 86 - The Planning Process.” AEBG. <http://aebg.cccco.edu/About/AB-86-Planning>

<sup>2</sup> “About the Adult Education Grant Block.” California Community College Chancellor’s Office. <http://aebg.cccco.edu/About>

## KEY FINDINGS

- **The biggest change in consortia structure from the passage of AB86 to AB104 is expansion in membership.** Furthermore, consortia intend to expand partner relationships, as well as current partner members' roles in consortium work. Some consortia also report a need to expand the number and roles of staff members.
- **Open and frequent communication between members and with the public is a key consortia goal.** Consortia have multiple methodologies for communicating internally, as well as keeping stakeholders and community members informed of their current and planned work. Many consortia also actively invite public participation at meetings.
- **Consortia favor consensus in decision making and approval.** When consensus cannot be reached, the most common decision-making model among consortia is majority approval in which each member receives one vote.
- **While most consortia offer all types of adult education outlined in Objective 1 of AB86, they express concern over the quality and availability of educational programming.** Consortia frequently identify short term career technical education, apprenticeships, and programs for adults with disabilities as the most needed adult education opportunities.
- **Currently, consortia focus data collection efforts on assessing the adequacy and quality of existing adult educational programming in the region.** These needs assessments will inform the future work and shape the development and implementation of new and revised educational opportunities within each consortium.
- **Consortia highly value community partnerships.** Partner members are involved in workgroup activities, consortia meetings, and in advisory goals, and represent various industries.

## OVERVIEW OF AEBG CONSORTIA

This section provides a summary and synthesis of relevant components across consortia, including the structure and organization of each consortium, changes in governance between AB86 to AB104, communication styles, decision-making strategies, local community needs, and evaluation methods.

### CONSORTIA STAKEHOLDERS

#### MEMBERS

AB86 defines eligible consortium membership as “any community college district, school district, county office of education or any joint powers authority consisting of any combination of these located within the boundaries of the adult education region.”<sup>3</sup> All 16 selected consortia include representation from K-12 school districts and community colleges (or community college districts that contain two or more colleges).

**All but two consortia in the sample have full membership with all eligible members participating.** One consortia reported eligible members declining membership for undisclosed reasons, and the other reported that the entities that declined planned to serve in advisory rather than participatory roles. Five of the 16 selected consortia include representation from a County Office of Education (COE) and one consortium includes two COEs. One consortium reports membership from an adult school associated with the regional detention center. From AB86 to AB104, none of the sample consortia reported a *loss* in institutional membership.

#### MEMBER ROLES AND LEADERSHIP

**Consortia typically vary in organizational structure, but share common core elements.** Few consortia detail their organizational structure in their governance plans; though some do provide an organizational chart as part of supplemental documentation. Three consortia do not detail organizational structure in any submitted documentation. As mandated in AB86, all consortia have a designated fiscal agent who is “responsible for distributing the funds and required expenditure reports.”<sup>4</sup> Most consortia designate leadership through a chair person (or co-chairs) or an executive committee (or steering committee) comprised of all or some member representatives. Leadership is charged with responsibilities including setting meeting agendas, leading meetings, creating and assigning members to workgroups, strategic leadership, and community partner recruitment.

**All selected consortia divide responsibility across a series of workgroups within the organizational structure.** Workgroups vary in name, membership (many consortia include

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<sup>3</sup> “Adult Education Block Grant Legislative Overview.” AEBG. <http://aebg.cccco.edu/About/Legislation>

<sup>4</sup> “Adult Education Regional Planning.” California Department of Education, California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, 2015. p. 10.  
[http://aebg.cccco.edu/portals/1/docs/2015\\_AB86\\_AdultEducation%20Legislative%20Report.pdf](http://aebg.cccco.edu/portals/1/docs/2015_AB86_AdultEducation%20Legislative%20Report.pdf)

partner members in the workgroups), and focus. Workgroups typically develop, plan, and implement work that furthers the consortium’s and AEBG’s goals, as well as inform and advise the consortium and its leadership. Several consortia have additional advisory groups, which provide the consortia with expertise, input, and advice.

Members and community partners are the most common workgroup members, but stakeholders, faculty, students, and other interested and qualified individuals also contribute to some of the consortia’s work. Four consortia report in their regional plans that while workgroups, advisory groups, and other similar bodies have been formed within the organizational structure, work has not yet commenced. Some examples of workgroup areas of focus or responsibility include:



### COMMUNITY PARTNERS

**Consortia rely heavily on community partner members to lend support, expertise, and resources to inform work and further their goals.** In the view of the Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium, “partnerships across educational institutions, apprenticeship programs, workforce agencies, and community based organizations have been critical to rethinking and redesigning adult education in the region.”<sup>5</sup> Many consortia report partner members’ involvement in the planning and development processes from the beginning of AEBG work, which indicates the high value consortia place on their expertise and resources. Fourteen consortia included a roster of current partner organizations in their regional plans; however, while two consortia identified potential partners.

Partner members across consortia are highly diverse but represent several common key industries, as outlined in Figure 1. A more detailed summary of consortia partnerships can be found in the data supplement. Several consortium’s regional plans express the desire and intent to expand the partnerships based upon their assessment of the regions’ needs and planned work.

<sup>5</sup> “AB86 Comprehensive Regional Plan.” Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium, 2015. p. 6. [http://www.caerc.org/pdf/CAERC\\_Comprehensive\\_Regional\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.caerc.org/pdf/CAERC_Comprehensive_Regional_Plan.pdf)

**Figure 1: Types of Partner Organizations**

SECTOR	EXAMPLES
<b>Educational Services</b>	Tutoring programs, libraries, non-profit organizations, educational institutions not considered “eligible members” (e.g., private schools, universities)
<b>Social Services</b>	Housing assistance, work placement, vocational training
<b>Health Services</b>	Hospital systems, clinics, non-profit organizations
<b>Safety/Correctional Services</b>	Emergency service departments, sheriff/police departments, correctional/detention centers
<b>Business Sector</b>	Chambers of Commerce, trade associations, local businesses
<b>Local Government</b>	Local elected and appointed officials
<b>State and Federal Programs</b>	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Titles I, III, IV, CalWORKS, SNAP E&T
<b>California Specific Initiatives and Grants</b>	Recipients of grants, such as: CTE Incentive Grant, Basic Skills Transformation partners, Career Pathway Trust, CTE Unlocked

Source: AEBG Governance Plans

Some consortia partner with state and federal programs aligned with AEBG goals. For example, half of sampled consortia partner with California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs). CalWORKs is a welfare program that provides services to needy families, including monetary assistance for food and housing, medical care, clothing, and other valuable services. County welfare departments run CalWORKs in all of California’s counties.<sup>7</sup> Three other consortia plan to expand their community partners to include CalWORKs.

No consortia specified alignment with other state or federal programs, such as funding available through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Program (SNAP E&T), which assists job seekers with training, support, resources, and employment.<sup>8</sup> Hanover also examined consortia partnerships with recipients of California grants, such as the Career Technical Education (CTE) Incentive Grant or Career Pathways Trust (CCPT). No consortia explicitly reported partnering with recipients of these programs; however, this does not mean there are no such partnerships within consortia.

**STAFF**

Half of consortia reported paid staff members. The most common paid staff members included program coordinators or directors. Staff are responsible for many duties, including meeting planning and facilitation, clerical work, communication, and strategic leadership. Two consortia report staff members with web design and technical support duties, and another two reported the use of external research consultants. Full staff counts for each

<sup>7</sup> “California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs).” California Department of Social Services. <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/calworks/>

<sup>8</sup> [1] “WIOA Overview.” United States Department of Labor. <https://www.doleta.gov/WIOA/Overview.cfm> [2] “Federal Jobs Training Programs.” United States Department of Agriculture. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/Federal-Jobs-Programs>

consortium are included in the data supplement, although external research consultants are not included in these staff counts.

Eight consortia do not report having paid staff. Four consortia detail potential roles and responsibilities for future hires, citing the need for assistance as the consortia’s work increases. The remaining four do not include language about staffing in any of their submitted documentation.

## CHANGES IN ADULT EDUCATION CONSORTIUM FROM AB86 TO AB104

Consortia have remained relatively stable in their organizational structure from the passage of AB86 to AB104. No consortia outlined major organizational changes, loss in membership, or procedural or governance changes. **The most prevalent type of change identified in consortia’s regional plans was expansion.** Many consortia intend to expand the number and involvement of partner members, stakeholders, the public, and staff. While partner members were already involved in planning processes, workgroup activities, and advisement, many consortia plan to utilize these partnerships to greater capacity as their work continues and increases.

## COMMUNICATION

**Consortia across the state agree on the importance of communication to develop effective partnerships and build relationships with the public.** The Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium notes that “the goal is to facilitate consistent and effective communication across the consortium internally between members and partners and externally between the consortium and the public.”<sup>11</sup> Most consortia use public websites to advertise meeting dates, post agendas and minutes, and open agenda items for public comment. Many regional plans include current or planned methods for reaching partner members, stakeholders, and the public, including:

- Encouraging attendance at consortium meetings
- Workshops
- Presentations at regional meetings, such as school board meetings or local council meetings
- Listservs
- Newsletters
- Collaboration with local media sources

Common practices of internal communication include regular consortia and workgroup (if applicable) meetings, email updates, circulation of meeting agendas and minutes, and cloud based document sharing. Though the frequency of consortia and workgroup meetings vary—many consortia report holding monthly meetings, which are supplemented with virtual communication. Consortia and their workgroups use meetings for many purposes, including identifying and leveraging partnerships, assessing community need, developing plans, sharing resources and tools among members, and convening experts.

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<sup>11</sup> “AB86 Comprehensive Regional Plan,” Op. cit., 13.



## DECISION-MAKING

**Eleven of the 16 selected consortia grant each member one vote in formal decision-making scenarios.** One consortium also grants a vote to two workgroup representatives, and two consortia with community college district members grant one vote to each of the colleges within the district. Of those consortia that do not use a one to one voting system, two consortia weight the votes based on the type of member (K-12 district, community college, or COE). Another consortium gives adult education programming members two votes and all other members one vote.

Though most consortia prefer to work toward consensus on decisions, many provide details on how decisions are reached if consensus is not possible. In the absence of consensus, **most consortia use a simple majority to approve decisions**, although six consortia use a super majority (two-thirds or three-fourths majority). Additionally, some governance plans detail decision-making procedure in the event of a tie, typically giving the responsibility to the chair of the membership body.

Consortia make decisions on a wide variety of topics. Some decisions are structural or organizational, such as the allocation of funding and other resources, procedural issues, consortia leadership, staffing, and workgroups. Other decisions are strategic in nature, such as changes in or the development of new educational programming, implementation of aspects of AEBG, or community outreach.

## COMMUNITY NEED

### IN-NEED POPULATIONS

All consortia identify similar communities in need of adult educational services, although the magnitude of need is likely dependent on the overall demographics and economy of the consortium region. **Immigrants, non-English native speakers (most often Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish populations), unemployed and/or impoverished individuals, and individuals without a high school diploma or GED were most commonly identified as in-need populations.** Less frequently noted in-need populations include adults with disabilities (though most consortia do offer educational opportunities and programs) and incarcerated individuals.

### CURRENT ENGAGEMENT

**Most consortia offer a wide variety of adult learning programs or opportunities, and note the need for continued assessment of the accessibility and quality of the programs, especially for short term CTE, apprenticeships, and adults with disabilities.** The accompanying data supplement provides information about what types of services are offered by each consortium. These services are included in AB86's Objective 1, which identifies the "evaluation of current levels and types of adult education programs within the

region, as well as an indication of the quality and adequacy of the programs.”<sup>12</sup> The categories of education consortia include: adult basic education (ABE)/adult secondary education (ASE), English as a second language (ESL), citizenship, workforce preparation for immigrants, educational opportunities for adults with disabilities, short-term career technical education (CTE), and apprenticeships.

Consortia reach out to communities in need by offering educational programming that considers lifestyle limitations (such as transportation or work schedules). Many consortia report similar methodologies of delivering educational programs, such as night and early morning classes, web-based training, and offering or advertising educational programming in central communication locations (libraries, civic centers, schools, etc.). Some consortia report unique means of accommodating communities’ needs for alternative learning opportunities. Three members of the Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium provide students with distance learning tools (DVDs, books and other reading materials, and online materials) to take home as additional study aides.<sup>13</sup> The Contra Costa County Adult Education Consortium reports a unique extended externship program that results in an entry or secondary level employment position.<sup>14</sup>

Consortia regional plans include communication plans, but most of these fail to address communication and outreach aimed at specific communities of need. However, many consortia identify the *need* for more collaborative, targeted, and effective outreach and communication as a priority.

## EVALUATION

**All consortia collect data on adult educational programs and their participants.** Consortia were required to submit enrollment, financial, and regional demographic data to the CCCC, but all consortia have expanded their data collection for the purposes of conducting regional needs assessments as well. Types of data collected include staffing, budgetary, curriculum, student performance, and other data elements from members and partners. Additionally, some consortia conducted focus groups comprised of stakeholders and partner members to collect qualitative data to assess programs’ quality and adequacy. Others administered regional surveys as a supplement to their needs assessments.

Common measurements consortia use to assess current education programs include enrollment, student retention rates, student performance, funding levels, operational costs. The Southern Alameda County Consortium documents school-wide learning outcomes to demonstrate which elements are successful and which may be lacking.<sup>15</sup> Santa Cruz County

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>14</sup> “Regional Comprehensive Plan- Final Report.” Contra Costa County Adult Education Consortium, 2015. p. 14. <http://aebg.cccco.edu/Consortia/Consortia-List?id=56900b2b88f53f007bea7a00>

<sup>15</sup> “Southern Alameda County Consortium Comprehensive Regional Plan.” Southern Alameda County Consortium, 2015. p. 27. <http://aebg.cccco.edu/portals/1/docs/plans/13-328-38%20Ohlone%203.1.15%20Final%20Plan.pdf>

Adult Education Consortium uses student pre- and post-test scores on practice GED exams as an evaluation measurement.<sup>16</sup>

While consortia detail the types of data collected (and begin to collect) to conduct needs assessments and plan evaluations, they provide little detail describing how data are shared, stored, and accessed. The consortia's preliminary data collection efforts and subsequent needs assessments serve to inform the consortia as they plan, develop, and implement changes to the existing systems.

Moving forward, all consortia plan to develop a consortium-wide database to evaluate programs, track students, and share information among members once new programs and changes to existing programs are implemented. Some consortia mention unique intentions for their data collection, such as GIS mapping of current and planned educational opportunities, analysis of public transportation routes to increase accessibility, curriculum development, setting funding formulas, assess the viability of program expansion, and provide resources to stakeholders.

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<sup>16</sup> "Final Regional Comprehensive Plan." Santa Cruz County Adult Education Consortium, 2015. p. 9. <https://www.cabrillo.edu/services/president/documents/13-328-005SantaCruzCountyAdultEducationConsortium3115FinalPlan.pdf>

## APPENDIX

### LIST OF CONSORTIA MATERIALS

*Barstow Area Consortium for Adult Education*

<https://aebg.knackhq.com/aebg#consortia-directory/view-consortium-details2/56900b2b88f53f007bea79da/view-file-details/56a13298a20684a33d733951/>

*Butte-Glenn Adult Ed Consortium*

<http://aebg.cccco.edu/Consortia/Consortia-List?id=56900b2b88f53f007bea79c4>

*Contra Costa County Adult Education Consortium (CCCAEC)*

<http://aebg.cccco.edu/Consortia/Consortia-List?id=56900b2b88f53f007bea7a00>

*Capital Adult Education Regional Consortium (CAERC)*

<http://aebg.cccco.edu/Consortia/Consortia-List?id=56900b2b88f53f007bea79de>

*Gateway Adult Education Network*

<http://aebg.cccco.edu/Consortia/Consortia-List?id=56900b2b88f53f007bea79d6>

*Gavilan Regional Academic and Career Education Services*

<http://aebg.cccco.edu/Consortia/Consortia-List?id=56900b2b88f53f007bea79f4>

*Imperial County Adult Education Consortium*

<http://aebg.cccco.edu/Consortia/Consortia-List?id=56900b2b88f53f007bea79ea>

*Los Angeles Regional Adult Education Consortium*

<http://aebg.cccco.edu/Consortia/Consortia-List?id=56900b2b88f53f007bea79e0>

*Northern Alameda Consortium for Adult Education (NACAE)*

<http://aebg.cccco.edu/Consortia/Consortia-List?id=56900b2a88f53f007bea79be>

*North Orange County Regional Consortium*

<http://aebg.cccco.edu/Consortia/Consortia-List?id=56900b2b88f53f007bea79ca>

*Rancho Santiago Adult Education Consortium*

<http://aebg.cccco.edu/Consortia/Consortia-List?id=56900b2a88f53f007bea79bc>

*San Bernardino Community College District Consortium*

<http://aebg.cccco.edu/Consortia/Consortia-List?id=56900b2a88f53f007bea79b4>

*San Luis Obispo County Adult Education Consortium*

<http://aebg.cccco.edu/Consortia/Consortia-List?id=56900b2a88f53f007bea79a8>

*Santa Cruz AEBG Consortium*

<http://aebg.cccco.edu/Consortia/Consortia-List?id=56900b2a88f53f007bea79ae>

*Siskiyou Adult Education Consortium*

<http://aebg.cccco.edu/Consortia/Consortia-List?id=56900b2a88f53f007bea797e>

*Sonoma County Adult Education Consortium*

<http://aebg.cccco.edu/Consortia/Consortia-List?id=56900b2a88f53f007bea7994>

*Southern Alameda County Consortium*

<http://aebg.cccco.edu/Consortia/Consortia-List?id=56900b2b88f53f007bea79c8>

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